

CJR

COLUMBIA
JOURNALISM
REVIEW

MAY/JUNE 1991 • \$3

BEHIND
THE SCENES
WITH PULITZER
JURORS

◆
THE ETHICS
OF A STING

◆
TURNED-OFF
VOTERS:
IS THE PRESS
TO BLAME?

WAR COVERAGE LINGERING QUESTIONS

S
ING
”

***** 5-DIGIT 48103

BG 00236 BN 00001

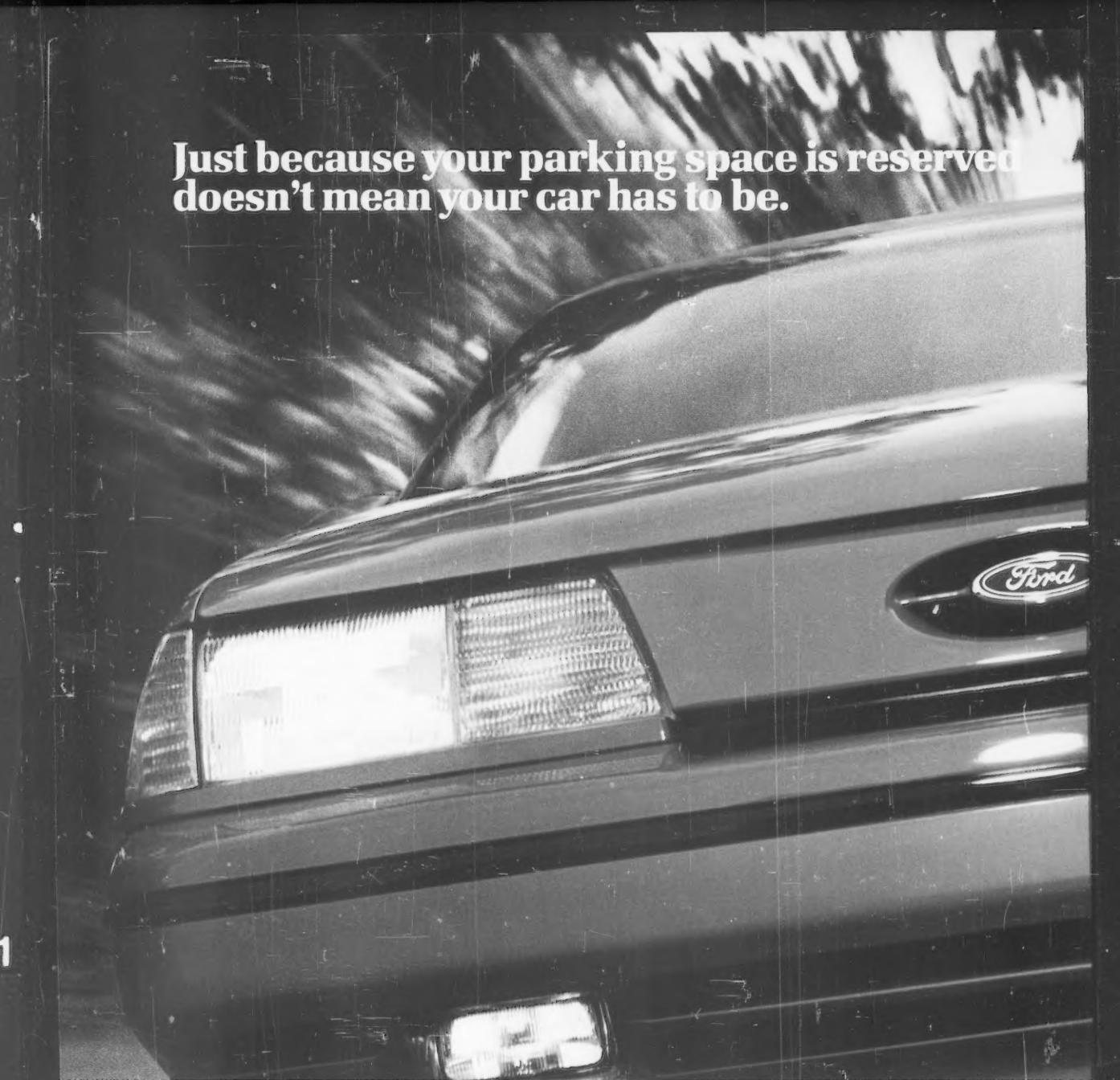
CJ MCR72E300X039SAMPLE

XEROX U MICROFILMS

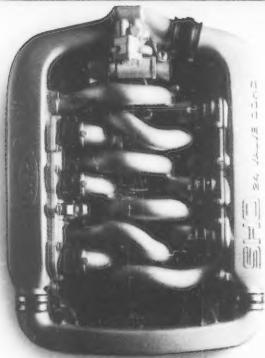
SERIALS
300 NO ZEEB RD
ANN ARBOR, MI 48103



0



**Just because your parking space is reserved
doesn't mean your car has to be.**



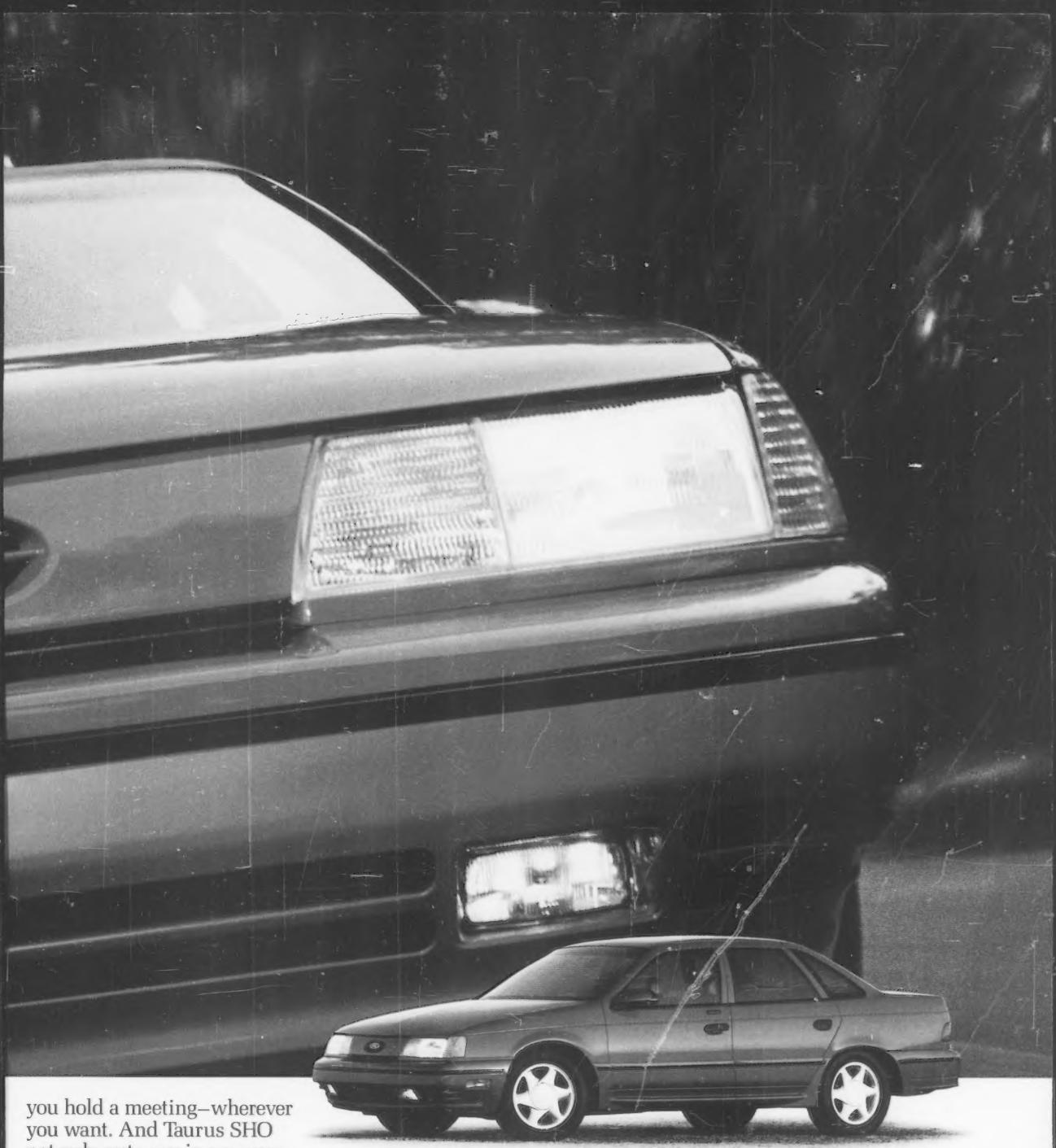
2 4 - V A L V E
2 2 0 H P
F O R D
T A U R U S
S H O

**Just when they thought they had you
all figured out.**

Now that you've arrived, a departure may be in order. We recommend the Ford Taurus SHO. A little pressure to the gas pedal, and its 220 horsepower, 24-valve, Super High Output (SHO) V-6 will change your perspective. A change enhanced by SHO's newly refined 5-speed manual transmission, engineered for smoother, more precise shifting.

**Think of it as a sports car with
a conference room.**

With plenty of room for five, Taurus SHO lets



you hold a meeting—wherever you want. And Taurus SHO not only puts you in a powerful position, but a comfortable one with its fully articulated sport seats.

Protect your assets.

Of course, Taurus SHO comes with state-of-the-art features like anti-lock brakes, and a standard driver's side air bag supplemental restraint system to be used with your safety belt.

Taurus SHO. Because what you put in your parking space has everything to do with what you get out of it.

Buckle up—together we can save lives.

Ford Taurus SHO

Have you driven a Ford... lately?



You used to hate it when he told you what to do.
Now sometimes you wish he would.



12 YEARS OLD WORLDWIDE • BLENDED SCOTCH WHISKY • 43% & 40% ALC./VOL (86° & 80°) • © 1990 CHIVAS BROS IMPORT CO., NEW YORK, N.Y.

What are you saving the Chivas for?



To send a gift of Chivas Regal anywhere in the U.S.A.,
call 1-800-238-4373. Void where prohibited.

"TO ASSESS
THE PERFORMANCE
OF JOURNALISM...
TO HELP STIMULATE
CONTINUING
IMPROVEMENT IN
THE PROFESSION,
AND TO SPEAK OUT
FOR WHAT IS
RIGHT, FAIR,
AND DECENT"

From the founding editorial,
1961



An exuberant Kuwaiti soldier on his way home

• • • • • WAR COVERAGE • • • • •

What we saw, what we learned

The war may be over, but the problems that emerged in trying to cover it are still with us. The experiences and afterthoughts of five journalists point to some questions that linger.

Another front BY MICHAEL MASSING	23
The pool BY WILLIAM BOOT	24
The "unilaterals" BY CHRIS HEDGES	27
Arnett BY WALTER GOODMAN	29
The dead BY LAURIE GARRETT	32

Campaign '92: Where have all the people gone?

Voter participation keeps dropping. If the press is part of the problem, can it come up with a solution?

BY JAMES BOYLAN	33
-----------------	----

Dispatches from a forgotten front

Journalists in three countries exhibit courage and ingenuity as they pursue dangerous and politically sensitive stories.

El Salvador BY CHRIS NORTON	36
Peru BY ROBIN KIRK	37
Colombia BY DAVID LLOYD MARCUS	38

Picking the Pulitzers

Enter the World Room; join the jurors at work. Listen in on their comments — and to the thud of rejected entries.

BY BILL DEDMAN	41
----------------	----

♦ Chronicle 13

*A drowning pool at NBC?
Resources: Factsheet Five
Boca Raton's reinvented newspaper*

The Register redraws its borders

*Those anonymous letters to the editor
EMFs and cancer — and the press*



♦ TECHNOLOGY 45

Who will rewrite America?

BY MARK SILK

♦ JUDGMENT CALL 49

To sting or not to sting?

BY MARCEL DUFRESNE

♦ ON THE JOB 52

Who gets quote approval?

BY PHILIP WEISS

♦ OPINION 55

The upside of a downturn

BY DANIEL LAZARE

♦ BOOKS 58

Battle lines

Fighting for Air: in the Trenches with Television News

by Liz Trotta
reviewed by Jon Katz



♦ LETTERS 4

♦ DARTS AND LAURELS 19

♦ SHORT TAKES 62

♦ THE LOWER CASE 65

CJR

PUBLISHER
JOAN KONNER
EDITOR
SUZANNE BRAUN LEVINE
SENIOR EDITOR
JON SWAN
MANAGING EDITOR
GLORIA COOPER
ART DIRECTOR
CHRISTIAN von ROSENVINGE
ASSOCIATE EDITOR
MICHAEL HOYT
CONTRIBUTING EDITORS
JAMES BOYLAN
CHRIS HANSON
JON KATZ
MICHAEL MASSING
BRUCE PORTER
KAREN ROTHMYER
STEVE WEINBERG
RESEARCH ASSOCIATE
MARGARET KENNEDY
PRODUCTION ASSISTANTS
DENISE DeJOSEPH, SHELLY J. HANN
INTERNS
ROD BENSON, BETTY WONG
ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER
DENNIS F. GIZA
ADVERTISING DIRECTOR
LOUISA D. KEARNEY
LEADERSHIP NETWORK
ROBERT F. SENNOFF, JR.

◆

FOUNDING PUBLISHER
EDWARD W. BARRETT
FACULTY CONSULTANTS
BARBARA BELFORD,
OSBORN ELLIOTT, PHYLLIS T. GARLAND,
KENNETH K. GOLDSTEIN
STEPHEN D. ISAACS, LUTHER P. JACKSON, JR.,
DONALD R. SHANOR,
FREDERICK TCH-CHI YU
SUSTAINING GRANTS
THE BAUMAN FOUNDATION
CABOT FAMILY CHARITABLE TRUST
THE AARON DIAMOND FOUNDATION
MEREDITH CORPORATION
THE SAUL AND JANICE POLIAK
CENTER FOR THE STUDY
OF FIRST AMENDMENT ISSUES
THE FLORENCE AND JOHN SCHUMANN
FOUNDATION

◆

COLUMBIA JOURNALISM REVIEW

700 JOURNALISM BUILDING
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY
NEW YORK, NY 10027
EDITORIAL: (212) 854-1881
BUSINESS & ADVERTISING: (212) 854-2716
SUBSCRIPTIONS: (800) 669-1002

LETTERS

GLITCHES GALORE!

◆ As one who has retired from the field, I was aware that the proofreader was a threatened species, but it took the March/April issue of CJR to convince me that the breed is extinct.

On page 63, Maury Povich is identified in a cutline as co-author of *Current Affairs: A Life on the Edge*; he is Maury Povich. Below that is a reference to "the forward" of another book. (Does it contain a backward, too?)

Let us bow our heads and murmur the timeless benediction of printers for that which is hopelessly beyond help: *etaino shrldlu.*

AILSA B. DEWING
LABELLE, FLA.

The editors reply: *And that's not the half of it! In that same bedeviled issue, the first name of Laurel recipient Maria Henson was changed to Marie; Dan Rather and Tom Bettag were transported (via photo caption) from the Forbidden City to Tiananmen Square; the word "courageous" was boldly misspelled; and even the sainted Edward R. Morrow [sic] could not escape the demons in our system.*

More serious was the Dart quite properly aimed at the San Francisco Chronicle — but which somehow managed to land at the door of the San Francisco Examiner, the paper's archrival. The item also promoted Greg Lucas, state capital reporter for the Chronicle, to Sacramento bureau chief.

We regret the errors and apologize to the Examiner and to Ms. Henson. We hope that, as our initiation into the mysteries of desktop publishing progresses, such mistakes will not be seen again.

Columbia Journalism Review (ISSN 0010 - 194X) is published bimonthly under the auspices of the faculty, alumni, and friends of the Graduate School of Journalism, Columbia University. Volume XXX, Number 1 May/June 1991. Copyright © 1991 Graduate School of Journalism, Columbia University. Subscription rates: one year \$18; two years \$32; three years \$45. Canadian and foreign subscriptions, add \$4 per year. Back issues: \$5.50. Please address all subscription mail to: Columbia Journalism Review, Subscription Service Department, P.O. Box 1943, Marion, Ohio 43302; (800) 669-1002. Editorial office: 700 Journalism Building, Columbia University, New York, N.Y. 10027, (212) 854-1881. Business office: 700A Journalism Building, Columbia University, New York, N.Y. 10027; (212) 854-2716. Second-class postage paid at New York, N.Y. and at additional mailing office. No claims for back copies honored after one year. National newsstand distribution: Eastern News Distributors, Inc., 1130 Cleveland Road, Sandusky, Ohio 44870. Postmaster: send Form 3579 to Columbia Journalism Review, P.O. Box 1943, Marion, Ohio 43302.

THOSE AUGUST DRUMS

◆ In "The Drums of August" (CJR, March/April), Arthur E. Rowse correctly notes my finding that during the first two weeks of August 1990 three out of four TV news references to George Bush were favorable. He uses this datum to argue that the media aided the march to war by supporting Bush at least until the second troop deployment in November.

However, the article fails to note that evaluations of Bush's Persian Gulf policy during early August were evenly split between praise and criticism. Moreover, if the networks briefly led cheers for George Bush in early August, they quickly resumed their more typical critical posture.

S. ROBERT LICHTER
CO-DIRECTOR
CENTER FOR MEDIA
AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS
WASHINGTON, D.C.

THE VIETNAM DIFFERENCE

◆ Re: "Covering the Gulf War: Talking Back to the Tube" (CJR, March/April): In the process of condensing my twenty-minute conversation with my friend Dick Valeriani, CJR's editors introduced an error. Discussing TV and public support for U.S. wars, my comment should have read: "In Korea, you had censorship and no TV. In Vietnam, you had TV and no censorship. Public support for each war fell at roughly the same rate."

There was no censorship — i.e., military review and veto power over outgoing dispatches — in Vietnam. Instead, there were "ground rules," voluntarily observed by journalists, which forbade mention of future troop movements, premature reporting of unit strength, location, and exact losses, etc. Violations were few and inadvertent.

PETER BRAESTRUP
SENIOR EDITOR/DIRECTOR
OF COMMUNICATIONS
THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
WASHINGTON, D.C.

UNFAIR TO CNN?

◆ Jon Katz is right to point out ("Collateral Damage to Network News," CJR, March/April) that CNN's coverage of the gulf war seems certain to reshape the national TV news scene. But running the side-by-side

ECONOMICS
JOURNALISM

Pamela Hollie Kluge
Edited by

WINNING
PULITZERS

KAREN ROTHMYER

The Stories Behind
Some of the Best News Coverage
of Our Time

NOW
the
News

EDWARD BLISS, JR.

A TWENTIETH CENTURY FUND ESSAY

The Critic,
Power,
and the
Performing
Arts

WINNING PULITZERS, Karen Rothmyer • \$29.00 NOW THE NEWS, Edward Bliss, Jr. • \$34.95

A PLACE IN THE NEWS, Kay Mills • \$37.50 cloth, \$14.95 paper

THE COLUMBIA KNIGHT-BAGEHOT GUIDE TO BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS JOURNALISM, Edited by Pamela Hollie Kluge • \$39.50
PRESERVING THE PRESS, Leo Bogart • \$40.00 THE CRITIC, POWER, AND THE PERFORMING ARTS, John E. Booth • \$27.95

AT BETTER BOOKSTORES.

Columbia University Press • Dept. T54 • 136 South Broadway, Irvington, NY 10533 • (914) 591-9111 • Fax: (914) 591-9201
To Order: call, write or fax. Credit cards accepted.

reports from CNN in Baghdad and Edward R. Murrow in London was specious analysis and plain mean-spirited.

To point out the obvious, Murrow wasn't under fire at the moment, so it's safe to assume that he had the time to compose his thoughts. I can forgive a CNN reporter for sounding a little unglued when the bombs are falling. Second, surely even the legendary Murrow must have said something during his career that fell short of eloquence.

Why do so many people feel obliged to add nasty footnotes to their admiration of CNN? Let's face it: Ed Turner and his minions rewrote the book on war coverage.

KENT SHAW
VERGENNES, VT.

MALCOLM, MASSON — AND BUSH?

◆ Regarding the issue of whether or not journalists should ever tidy up quotes ("Malcolm, Masson, and You," CJR, March/April), there is a good case to be made that journalists should let subjects speak for themselves and quote them verbatim, "um's" and all.

One of the most glaring examples of this need for factual diligence is when journalists quote President Bush. The Maureen Dowd verbatim quote cited by your author was an exception to the rule.

For a while some journalists diligently quoted verbatim the mangled English and factually adrift notions of Vice-President Quayle. One newspaper (the *San Jose Mercury News*, I believe) even trademarked its regular "Quayle Quotes" feature. Aside from the comedy this often provided, I was glad to get this insight into the VP's mind, scary as that might be. After all, he is indeed close to the presidency.

Why isn't President Bush's speech subjected to the same scrutiny? I for one am very interested in hearing exactly what the president says. If he waffles, contradicts himself, or doesn't make sense, I want to know that.

Since I am not invited to the White House press conferences and do not have access to transcripts of his speeches, I rely on the reports of the journalists who were there or on what the newspapers choose to reprint. So when journalists paraphrase or edit the president's quotes — or, most commonly, sum up what the president said, using a snippet of perhaps only five of his actual words — I, the reader, am given a portrayal that is not wholly true. Moreover, in its un-wholeness it verges on being untrue.

For the sake of clarity, journalists can still paraphrase what they think the president — or any subject — is trying to say. But since their perception is but one perception, they should follow or support this paraphrase with

a verbatim quote, complete and unadulterated. Anything else is less than the truth.

SUSAN PETERS
FREE-LANCE JOURNALIST
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIF.

A TRAIL RETRACED

◆ In your January/February issue you awarded a Dart to the Cedar Rapids, Iowa, *Gazette* for an editorial that characterized as "sound and understandable" the objections of homeowners whose property adjoined a proposed recreational trail but failed to mention that "among those nearby homeowners is Joe Hladky III, president and publisher of the Cedar Rapids *Gazette*."

There was a good reason for not mentioning it. Mr. Hladky, a trail user all his life, does not object to the nature trail ("Only if they decide to blacktop it," he says).

At the outset of the trail debate, neither *Gazette* reporters nor editorial writers realized the proposed trail's proximity to the Hladky residence. It's fair to say that we were short on information, but it isn't fair to say — as CJR did — that we "didn't blaze any ethical trails" in questioning the need for the trail.

JERRY ELSEA
EDITORIAL PAGE EDITOR
THE GAZETTE
CEDAR RAPIDS, IOWA

THAT CASTRO COOP SCOOP

◆ John Hess's squawk was fun reading but slightly off target. Phil Santora, the *Daily News* rewrite man, may well have concocted the fantasy tale of LITTLE RED HEN IN THE CASTRO COOP.

But it was hotel owner Edward Spatz himself who told reporters on September 19, 1960, that Fidel's pals were indeed chasing chickens. "They're peeling chickens up in those rooms right now," he said. "And they're going to cook them."

That doesn't justify *New York Newsday's* mistake last summer when we said that pigs drove Castro out of his mid-Manhattan hotel. Nor does it excuse the conclusion that Castro's chicken feathers were fantasy.

JAMES TOEDTMAN
MANAGING EDITOR
NEW YORK NEWSDAY

A HASTY DART?

◆ While I have no firsthand knowledge of the case, it seems to me you were too quick to throw a Dart at the Providence Journal Company (CJR, March/April) for putting the *Journal-Bulletin* "on the spot" by entering into a partnership to build a convention center in Providence. At the very least, why not

wait to see how the *Journal-Bulletin* covers the "premise and progress" of the plan to build the convention center and hotel?

MIKE FRANCIS
BUSINESS COLUMNIST
THE OREGONIAN
PORTLAND, ORE.

BEIJING REVISITED

◆ Marsden Epworth's "Letter From Beijing" (CJR, November/December) contains anecdotes with which many "foreign experts" might identify; it also contains numerous factual errors. These include:

• "What was read in China" is determined "primarily through the information office of the foreign ministry." That office has little to do with the contents of any publication, foreign or domestic, aside from holding mid-weekly briefings on China's relations with other countries, which are routinely attended by the Chinese and foreign media.

The institution that exercises the most influence in determining the ideological orientation of Beijing-based newspapers is the Central Propaganda Department of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist party. This is usually done through weekly meetings between propaganda officials and senior newspaper editors, who then pass on guidelines to their department heads.

• Epworth writes that the "sole mark on Chinese journalism to date" left by *People's Daily's* new publisher was exhorting his subordinates not to waste food. The publisher, Gao Di, installed in July 1989, spearheaded a vigorous and highly repressive campaign to restore ideological orthodoxy to the Communist party organ, making him one of the most formidable figures in Chinese journalism at the time. He presided over political rallies in the auditorium, a thoroughgoing purge of the editorial staff, and investigations that went so far as to analyze the handwriting of unbylined stories filed during the demonstrations to help determine the activities and contacts of individual reporters.

• *China Daily* reporters' base pay is determined by rank, seniority, and shift, not by "a minimum number of inches." However, all staffers can earn bonuses for free-lancing extra stories, much as U.S. newspaper employees are often paid free-lance fees for enterprise travel pieces and book reviews.

To anyone who experienced the rebellion within Beijing newspapers or the savagery of the crackdown, saying that journalists are controlled "through their pay envelopes" or that the presence of a visiting U.S. journalist was valuable because "someday Chinese reporters would need to think about these ideas," comes across as misinformed and patronizing.

Epworth apparently did not grasp to what

THE PICTURES



THE PULITZER

The 1991 Pulitzer Prize for Spot News Photography has been awarded to Greg Marinovich of The Associated Press, for a series of dramatic photos of a man being murdered during factional violence in Soweto, South Africa.

With this award, AP has now won an unprecedented 18 Pulitzer Prizes for news photography, and 35 Pulitzers overall. And continued a tradition of providing your paper—and readers—with prize-winning work.

Yet one more reason why—for more newspapers and more people around the world—**AP is the source.**

AP Associated Press



©1990 Toyota Motor Corporate Services of North America, Inc.

"I'D BE AN expert ON THIS BY NOW if I didn't have to take SO MANY naps."

SARAH BAGWELL, AGE 4, Cardome Center, Georgetown, Kentucky

NO, SARAH'S NOT
MASTERING a new
video game. It's a computer.

What's a four year old doing
in the same room as a computer,
you ask?

"Why not? It's long overdue,"
replies Debbie Highsmith,
director of the new early childhood
development program at the
Georgetown Cardome community
center. "At first glance, we look like
your everyday day care center. But
what our kids do here between

naps is quite remarkable."

Pre-schoolers here are taught
a second language: Spanish.
And when they're not playing



in the sandbox (still the most
popular activity) they can be
found in the computer room.

"By the time these children go
to school they will be well
prepared and ready to learn.

They'll know their colors,
numbers and the alphabet.
It gives them a tremendous
advantage," says Debbie.

Giving every youngster a running



start in life is the dream of Debbie
Highsmith and her dedicated
staff of 25.

And although it's still in its
infancy, the program is already
regarded by experts as a model
for the nation.

Toyota is proud to have
donated the \$1.3 million



Georgetown needed to start
this important community
and childcare center.

Naturally, we're happy that
the children of so many of our
employees are benefitting from
this superb day care.

But we are even more excited
by the long-term value of Debbie's
vision to the country as a whole.

How great will the impact of
this project be? We're not sure.

Although we hope that some
day Sarah and her trusty
computer will be able to give us
the answer.

TOYOTA
INVESTING IN THE INDIVIDUAL

When we are very young, we are possessors of a splendid gift: a mind that knows no limits.

Faced with a new experience, it allows us to make discoveries, gain insights — and, with time, learn something more of the world around us.



And, if we're truly fortunate, we'll never completely let go of the early innocence that keeps us forever open to new ideas.

That's why, since 1976, we've funded

and provided free-loan educational films to schools, to awaken a young person's imaginative spirit.

Already millions of students have seen "American Enterprise," an exciting profile of U.S. economic history; "The Search for Solutions" on science and problem solving; and "The Challenge of the Unknown," covering mathematics, all in an entertaining and involving way.

Because it's our desire to help young people realize that the only real limits to learning are the ones we make for ourselves.

PHILLIPS PETROLEUM COMPANY

To learn how your local school can obtain these films, write to: Educational Films, Phillips Petroleum Company, 16C-4PB, Bartlesville, Oklahoma 74004.

extent her own newspaper was at the forefront of events in April-June 1989, or how many "firsts" it scored. In more than ten years at large metropolitan dailies in the United States (including three as an editorial writer), I had not heard more impassioned discussions of democracy and press freedom than those in which our colleagues frequently engaged, nor had I seen more instances of personal courage. They have thought about these ideas far more than most of us have had to.

As Epworth noted, I, too, worked at *China Daily* — from September 1988 to December 1989, when my husband, a sociology lecturer at Beijing University and former reporter and editor at *China Daily*, received permission to leave China and resume studies at Harvard. Also during much of 1989 I was a weekly columnist for the Chinese-language newspaper *China Women's News*.

JEANNE MOORE
CAMBRIDGE, MASS.

♦ I think the real story at *China Daily* is not that it is controlled by the government, but that it exists at all and does as good a job as it does.

Those of us who worked at the paper during the demonstrations of April-May 1989 realize how much press freedom *China Daily* exercised. And we also know that the editors are still being called to account for having allowed this.

China Daily has done much good in its ten years of existence, and managing editor Chen Hui is both a gentleman and an intelligent leader who had directed its news operation through good times and is helping it survive these difficult days as well. The editors, as well as the reporters, have suffered from the repressive government controls that went into effect after the events of June.

I'm concerned that such a one-sided story as you have presented may discourage good American journalists from spending a year at *China Daily*. Even in these days of heavy-handed government controls, the experience might be incredibly valuable for people who are interested in learning about another culture and for seeing first-hand how intelligent people cope under a repressive system.

SHARON DIRLAM
SANTA BARBARA, CALIF.

Marsden Epworth replies: While the Communist party through its propaganda department may govern the news, the day-to-day monitoring of *China Daily* came directly from Prime Minister Li Peng's office and from the Foreign Ministry's Information Office, the place where managing editor Chen Hui gained his news experience.

Orders to call Kampuchea Cambodia and

to call demonstrators in Tiananmen Square counterrevolutionaries probably came from the party. But it was the foreign minister's office that telephoned to ask where we got our earthquake figures and that spiked a story on nuclear power development. While the party set the tenor of news coverage, it was the ministries that controlled the details we published. Government officials had to approve stories for which they were interviewed. And on occasion they were routed from one ministry to Li Peng's office for a final ruling.

For foreign stories, *China Daily* editors pored over wire service pieces such as those on Indonesia and Noriega's Panama, making certain nothing would offend these candidates for diplomatic liaisons. Editors also culled "political errors," like the fact that Poland had just created its first noncommunist-dominated government in forty-two years. Leaving that detail in the wire service copy could have precipitated a summons from the foreign ministry and a subsequent apology from the editors who let it pass. So, from *China Daily*'s newsroom it looked as though the foreign ministry took considerable interest in our daily work.

As for Gao Di, this man was a provincial party secretary until he was elevated to publisher of People's Daily after the Tiananmen Square killings. He is formidable, as Jeanne Moore says — and as People's Daily reporters still being investigated are fully aware. But staff purges and canteen management have nothing to do with informing the readership. And that is why reporters joked about his impact as a journalist.

Finally, as regards payment and control through pay envelopes, at People's Daily every story is awarded points for its writing, its orthodoxy, its length, its importance, its appeal to the editor who rates it. Every morning, reporters check the bulletin board to see how many points their latest piece earned. At the end of the month, bonuses are based on these points. This is one reason reporters do not like being investigated. They are rarely published until the investigation ends. This cuts their income considerably.

When I left the paper in July, reporters' bonuses at *China Daily* certainly depended on inches — well, centimeters really; we were metric at *China Daily*. One reporter quadrupled her month's base pay by writing lengthy pieces for her regular beat. Reporters also built bonuses by paring their pieces. They anguished little over jettisoning details that might result in a story's being killed. "Impassioned discussion" of press freedoms aside, when it came to making enough to buy a winter coat or just to keep smoking, news people censored themselves. They did it easily. And that is how a press is managed: not

by decrees from the Communist party's propaganda department, not by calls from the Foreign Ministry, not by threats from superiors, but by reporters who understand that suppressing the facts yields rewards and revealing the facts does not.

FOLLOW-UP

WRITERS BEHIND BARS

"Inside Stories" (CJR, January/February 1989) recounted what happened to federal prisoner Dannie Martin following publication in the San Francisco Chronicle of an article, titled "The Gulag Mentality," about the new warden at the Lompoc, California, federal prison. Two days after the appearance of the article in June 1989, Martin was placed in solitary confinement, after which he was moved around within the prison system, ending up in Phoenix.

Prison officials said Martin was transferred because he had violated a federal regulation stating that inmates "may not receive compensation or anything of value for correspondence with the news media. The inmate may not act as a reporter or publish under a byline," as Martin had done, contributing more than twenty articles to the Chronicle. (Martin's lawyer assigned another motive to the transfer — the hope of prison officials that "Dannie would disappear in the American gulag.")

Martin and the Chronicle challenged the constitutionality of the regulation and in November 1988 U.S. District Judge Charles A. Legge suspended it, saying that he wanted time to explore the issue more fully.

In July 1990, Judge Legge ruled that the Bureau of Prisons had not violated Martin's constitutional rights. The First Amendment rights of inmates, he stated, must be balanced "with their status as prisoners and with legitimate penological objectives." In an article in Mother Jones, Martin's editor at the Chronicle was quoted as saying of the ruling, "It puts the Bureau of Prisons in the editor's chair of every newspaper and magazine in America."

Recently, CJR received the following letter from federal prisoner Adam Starchild describing his experiences.

On June 7, 1988, *The New York Times* published an op-ed article by me titled "How Prisons Punish Prisoners with AIDS." As a result of the *Times* article, I was interviewed

by a Canadian radio reporter and by Anthony Spinelli of the Bridgeport, Connecticut, *Post*. A number of Connecticut radio stations aired news items based on *The Bridgeport Post* story. Interest in interviews was expressed by Steve Smith of WPVI-TV, an ABC affiliate in Philadelphia, and by Jon Meyersohn, producer of *The CBS Evening News*.

At this point, prison authorities apparently realized the danger of national television exposure. The administrator of the federal prison camp at Danbury told me that scheduling TV interviews would take weeks and might not be possible at all. Meanwhile, the prison system was taking its revenge on the AIDS victim I had written about by moving him from the camp to the more secure prison in Danbury, and a week later to an even more secure prison in North Carolina.

On July 3, 1988, the Danbury *News-Times* published a letter I wrote explaining that I was serving a sentence for mail fraud for ordering supplies, including computer software, for my company, which was unable to

pay the bills because of a large embezzlement loss the company had suffered. I described how, during my year in the federal prison at Danbury, I worked in the education department, where one of my duties was making illegal copies of computer programs for use within the prison and other institutions, and for personal use by prison staff.

The official response to the publication of this letter was to take me out of the prison camp and place me in solitary confinement in the main prison. This allegedly was to protect "the integrity of the investigation," but since the information already was public this was nonsense.

At the same time, a written order prohibited me from talking to my attorney.

On July 8, *News-Times* reporter Nanci Hutson was able to interview me, and the interview — about both the AIDS issue and the computer software piracy — was published in the paper on July 11.

Ten days later, with no advance notice, I was taken out of solitary confinement in Danbury and put on a bus to the U.S. penitentiary



Prisoner Adam Starchild

at Lewisburg, Pennsylvania, one of the most dangerous prisons in the country. After two weeks at Lewisburg, I was transferred to the federal prison at El Reno, Oklahoma.

During my travels I was cut off from mail, so I could not let friends and family know where I was. These retaliatory measures by the U.S. Bureau of Prisons serve as a measure of how feared writers are, and they have a chilling effect on other prisoners who otherwise would report prison news.

LaRouche REDUX

Readers of "Is Lyndon LaRouche Using Your Name?" (CJR, March/April 1985), written by Patricia Lynch, a producer at NBC News, may recall that in 1984 Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr., and NBC were engaged in litigation. The perennial presidential candidate had brought a \$150 million libel suit against the network following the airing of two reports that charged, among other things, that he was the head of a violence-prone, anti-Semitic cult that smeared its opponents and sued its critics. The network countersued, claiming that LaRouche and his followers had interfered with its newsgathering activities by, among other things, impersonating NBC reporters and producers. The counter-suit resulted in a \$256,000 judgment against the LaRouche organization. The producer of the reports at issue was Patricia Lynch.

The contest was rejoined this past September. Again, the report at issue was aired by NBC and produced by Lynch. On the segment aired on May 21, several elderly people charged that LaRouche supporters had preyed on them in various ways. The new LaRouche suit, filed in a federal court in Rockford, Illinois, accuses NBC of teaming up with an Illinois state prosecutor to intimidate legitimate financial supporters and prevent LaRouche's followers from exercising their constitutional rights. Lynch calls the charges "absolutely preposterous"; state prosecutor Dennis Schumacher declined to comment beyond calling the case "bizarre."

Dennis King, the author of *Lyndon LaRouche and the New American Fascism* (see Short Takes, CJR, July/August 1989), says that the LaRouche organization has filed hundreds of lawsuits over the years and that they have been effective in making reporters think twice before undertaking an investigation. (King himself has been sued three times by the LaRouche organization.)

LaRouche is currently in federal prison in Rochester, Minnesota, for violating federal income-tax laws; King says that LaRouche continues to direct his organization's activities from prison. A LaRouche spokesman in northern Virginia failed to respond to several requests for comment.

Daniel Lazare

SCRIPPS HOWARD NEWS SERVICE

SCRIPPS HOWARD NEWS SERVICE

The best edited, most readable news service*

SHNS enhances your coverage of the news with outstanding commentary, entertainment, health, business and more, in 60 to 80 stories daily.

For information call Irwin Breslauer at
800-221-4816 (in New York, **212-692-3700**).

SCRIPPS HOWARD
NEWS SERVICE
200 PARK AVENUE
NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10166
SHNS IS DISTRIBUTED BY UNITED MEDIA.

*study of major wire services, done by faculty team at University of Missouri School of Journalism, 1990

SCRIPPS HOWARD NEWS SERVICE

CHRONICLE

DROWNING POOL?

WHY SOME OLDER NBC EMPLOYEES HAVE THAT SINKING FEELING

Inside NBC's new editorial pool for producers, newswriters, and directors, it's a normal working day: one person is reading *Remembrance of Things Past*; another is writing a book; seven or eight people sit around chatting, waiting for something to do.

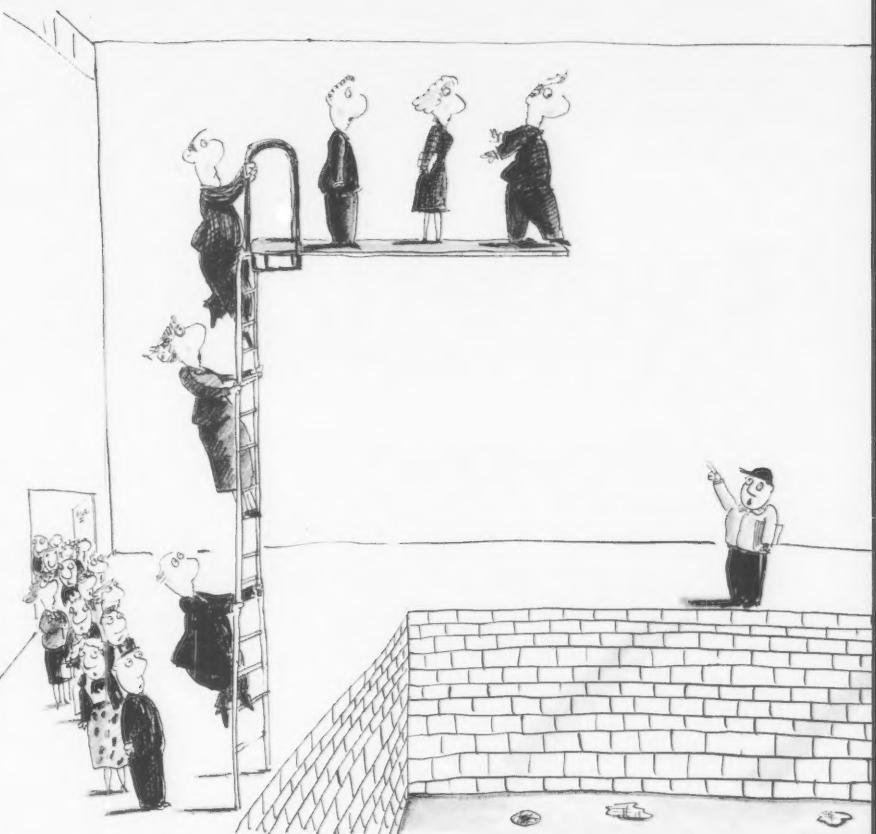
Pool members — half of whom are over fifty and all but one of whom are over forty — say they want to work but are systematically being underemployed in what they see as an effort to force them to quit. NBC, they say, is intent on

replacing them with cheap young recruits, but is barred from doing so in most cases by seniority clauses in union contracts.

"It's not a pool, it's a gulag," says Calvin Siemer, vice-president of NABET, the National Association of Broadcast Employees and Technicians, which represents newswriters and some producers, as well as many technical employees, at NBC. The pool's location adds to its members' sense of isolation.

While most of NBC News operates out of the third and fourth floors of Rockefeller Center, the "pool room" is located on the seventeenth floor, down the hall from *Saturday Night Live*.

NBC says every attempt is being made to utilize the twenty-two pool members, most of whom found themselves out of their old jobs when the network's news shows were ordered to cut



back and reshuffle their staffs last fall. Several others assigned to the pool had been employed by Skycom, NBC's syndicated news service for affiliates, before it was relocated to North Carolina and became the NBC News Channel.

Network officials defend the pool as a flexible and creative solution to a staffing problem. "During the war, the pool was really cooking," says Don Browne, vice-president for news. (Pool members concede that there was more to do during the gulf conflict, and that a few members are getting fairly regular work even now.) "Let's put this in context," says Peggy Hubble, director of the NBC News press office. "This is not something unique to NBC News. These are people who have jobs in a time when many people don't have jobs."

Two former pool members have received permanent assignments, and Browne says he is frustrated that other pool members aren't applying for jobs opening up on new NBC shows like *A Closer Look*, *Exposé*, and *Real Life with Jane Pauley*. Pool members, for their part, say that when they apply for these jobs they are turned away. And they cite several instances in which the network has brought on "per diems" or used young research assistants as newswriters or field producers while veterans in the pool treaded water.

"They seem to think they can hire people off the street and have them perform the job of experienced newsmen," says Bernard Brown, a sixty-three-year-old pool member who won an Emmy in 1989 when he was senior pro-

ducer of *Weekend Nightly News*. (Other pool members asked that their names not be printed.)

In a March 5 *Washington Post* story, NBC News president Robert Wright was paraphrased as saying that television stations could cut costs by replacing highly paid, experienced hands with "hungry twenty-three-year-olds." Betty Hudson, senior vice-president for corporate communications, says that the comment was taken out of context and that her boss had been referring to a hypothetical situation, not network policy. Wright was expressing his "frustration" at seeing so many résumés from bright young people and not being able to hire them "even when in many cases they could probably

CHRONICLE

do a better job than more experienced people," she says. The day after the *Post* story appeared, Wright issued a memo to all NBC employees reiterating the network's policy against discrimination, including age discrimination.

Despite network assurances that it wants to use pool members, all twenty-two were among those offered buyouts by NBC in March. In the meantime, some pool members say they are being given "demeaning" assignments, such as answering phones or delivering mail, as an inducement to leave.

NABET has filed a grievance with an impartial arbitrator, charging NBC with

discrimination based on age and union activity (six pool members are pursuing a longstanding suit accusing NBC of failing to pay for overtime). "Nothing can prevent the company from creating a pool," says Siemer, "but they can't create it in a discriminatory manner."

For now, pool members estimate that seven or eight of them will accept the buyout. Too young to retire early, too old to start somewhere else, the rest figure they'll stick it out with NBC as long as they can.

"If nothing else," says one, "it's a chance to catch up on my reading."

Rod Benson

Benson is an intern at CJR.

RESOURCES

FOUR QUESTIONS ABOUT FACTSHEET FIVE

Who is Mike Gunderloy? He is the chief cheerleader, archivist, and cross-pollinator in the world of "zines" (as in magazines).

What are "zines"? This is Gunderloy's word for very small-audience, often self-published magazines aimed at, well, just about any group in the world. They range from *American Cemetery*, a trade journal for graveyard management, to *Why is the Future Unfolding Shit?* a poetry journal published in Helsinki, Finland. Subject matter ranges from handguns to postcard collecting, from Basque politics to "Satanic messages found etched onto the vinyl of heavy metal records" (*Die Fat Piggy Die*). "There is probably some zine that covers every subculture that conceivably exists," Gunderloy says.

Why do people publish zines? Gunderloy asked zine publishers this question and printed some of their answers in a booklet titled *Why Publish?* Three samples:

"I publish to counter the consensus reality makers." Bob Banner, *Critique*.

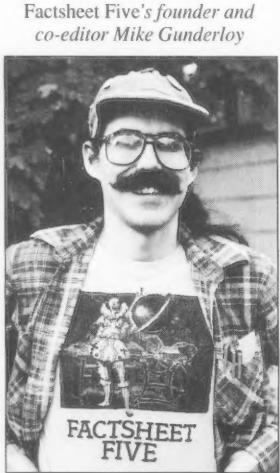
"I wanted to learn more about sex." Sylvia Carlson, *Apaeros*.

"The zine scene is an important tool for social change, and it seems to be heading in directions I like. I publish to help it along." Mike Gunderloy, *Factsheet Five*.

What is Factsheet Five? This is Gunderloy's zine of all zines. Started as a single photocopied sheet in 1982, it has grown into a 100-plus-page eight-times-

a-year publication that employs Gunderloy and co-editor Cari Goldberg Janice more than full time. Most of it is taken up with brief reviews of zines from across the land. Feature writers and reporters may find it useful in pursuing off-the-beaten-track story ideas and sources. (A subscription costs \$23; write: 6 Arizona Avenue, Rensselaer, N.Y. 12144-4502, or call: 518-479-3707).

A few snippets from reviews in the current issue:



CJR/Jennifer Tabakin

Coalition for Prisoners Rights Newsletter: What's wrong with the prisons, "much of it written by those behind bars."

Girl Jock: "For the athletic lesbian with a political consciousness."

Growing Without Schooling: Teaching children without formal schools.

Interrace: Focus on interracial couples and families.

The Kansas Intelligencer: A monthly conservative polemic "that doesn't pull any punches."

Keltic Fringe: Culture, folklore, history, and poetry from the Celtic lands around Britain.

A Load of Bull: A soccer magazine for fans of the United Kingdom's Wolverhampton Wanderers, including cheering songs.

Psychotic Prophets: From the "grassroots Christian underground."

USSR News Brief: From Germany, updates on political prisoners in the Soviet Union.

White Bread: "Angry dark scrawled drawings and interviews with very disaffected youth, some apparently orbiting the skinhead scene." Comes with a slice of toast glued to the cover.

Jennifer Tabakin

Tabakin was recently an intern at CJR.

DOING THE BOCA

AN INTERIM REPORT
FROM A REINVENTED NEWSPAPER

Is it *The News's* turn to laugh? Rival reporters in southeastern Florida have been calling Boca Raton's reinvented newspaper *The Flamingo News*, chuckling over its menu of news McNuggets and its *Miami Vice*-pastel decor, including the pink flamingo on the masthead.

To smile, anyway. Seven months after *The News's* relaunch, the once-struggling paper is 25 to 30 percent larger than it was a year ago, and editors say its news hole is up between 15 and 20 percent. It may be too soon to talk about success, however. *The News* says circulation has jumped by 4,500, to 26,500. But it is luring readers with ninety-nine-cents-per-week subscriptions, less than half the cost, for example, of the competing *Palm Beach Post*. Advertising is up, even in this recession, but a few employees wonder whether it is up enough to carry the editing-intensive paper when Knight-Ridder cuts the umbilical cord by the end of 1991, forcing the paper to rely entirely on its own money and talent. (Knight-Ridder has spent nearly \$3 million on its "25/43 Project" — named after the television-era readers in that age bracket — which has overseen the rebirth of *The News*.)

Watching the newspaper evolve was like watching Procter & Gamble develop and test-market a new toothpaste, says Pat Elich, a former editor at *The News*. Members of the 25/43 Project brainstormed with more than 200 editorial and other Knight-Ridder employees in six cities, then zeroed in on Boca Raton-area residents and advertisers. Focus groups were asked what they worry about, what they do in their spare time, and so forth. Finally, on October 11, the end product hit the new pink news racks.

So what's new? For one thing, no stories jump off page 1. Ever. On January 17, the day after coalition forces launched the air war against Iraq, the page-one story contained eleven paragraphs. But in what has come to be

CHRONICLE

called the "Boca Jump," readers were referred to additional maps, charts, and stories — some of them long — inside. These included plenty of local reaction (FOR BOYNTON RESIDENT, MIDEAST WAR SEEMS ALMOST UNREAL). To take a slower news day, on February 12 the lead story was four paragraphs long (BUSH: GROUND WAR ON HOLD). The other main items on the front page that day were a six-paragraph state budget piece (with a mid-length Boca Jump), some local residents' pictures and comments about a water problem, and the daily Local Opinion column, in which a reader wrote about how a particular local grocery store "displays the true spirit of the community."

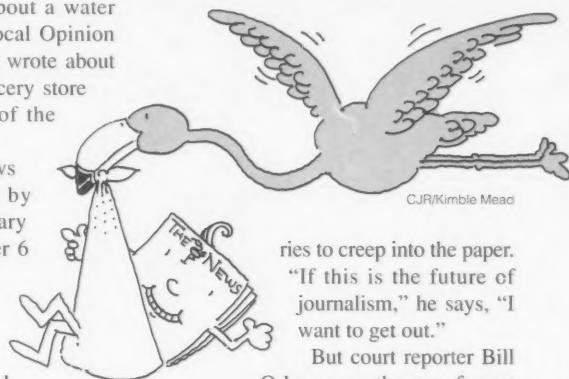
National and world news briefs are accompanied by numbered maps. On January 2, for example, the number 6 on London in the world map connected with item number 6, which explained that James and Charlotte had been declared the most popular first names for children in that city. Other lures: an index to every advertiser, a regular "Today's Hero" column, professional wrestling in the sports pages, and lots of photos and bite-size snippets and graphics.

Outside *The News*, reaction tends to be divided between those who see it as an innovative example of what newspapers must do to lure back readers in the age of television, and critics who see it as an example of what might kill off newspapers — the withering away of analytical, investigative, and detailed reporting. "It's pandering to people with the attention span of a gnat," says James G. Driscoll, *The News's* editor from 1976 to 1981 and now an editorial writer with the competing Fort Lauderdale *Sun-Sentinel*.

Wayne Ezell, current editor at *The News*, finds that kind of criticism unfair, and he points to examples of serious journalism his paper has produced, including a detailed look at Florida's auto-insurance "crisis" (October 11, the day the redesigned paper was launched), an extensive examination of how a local banker undermined his bank (December

23), and a series of features from Israel during the war.

Inside *The News*, the reaction is also mixed. "There's kind of a confusion, still, on what does the paper want to be. Cutting edge? Or a colorful, cheerful local paper?" says reporter Patrick McCreery. Some reporters complain that they must schedule certain stories three weeks in advance, and that they are called upon to write more stories and to produce many formatted short items. McCreery says that this kind of pressure makes it possible for single-source sto-



ries to creep into the paper. "If this is the future of journalism," he says, "I want to get out."

But court reporter Bill Orlove says the new format lets him write two good stories instead of one medium-length one. "Some of the stories I've been really proud of," he adds.

A few Boca Raton innovations are spreading to other newspapers. California's *Orange County Register* borrowed *The News's* how-to-read-the-stock-tables guide; at least two Knight-Ridder papers are considering ad indexes; and *The Kansas City Star* sometimes uses the "Boca Jump."

Not all *Kansas City Star* reporters are impressed, however. This lyric recently appeared on the paper's newsroom bulletin board, to be sung to the tune of "Beer Barrel Polka":

Roll out the Boca, we'll have a paper
that's quick
Roll out the Boca, too many words
make you sick
Keep it all nice and easy
Makin' more money's the trick
Now we're gonna roll out the Bocas
Until the circulation numbers click!

Sally Deneen

Deneen, a former reporter for the Sun-Sentinel of Fort Lauderdale, Florida, is a freelance writer.

THE REGISTER REGROUPS

A STATE PAPER REDRAWNS ITS BORDERS

While *The Des Moines Register* carries a city's name, it has always been a state paper. Many national leaders believe that the *Register's* esteemed Iowa Poll takes the pulse of middle America. Its three-person Washington bureau brings Iowans face to face with their congressional delegation just about every day and covers anything that affects the agribusiness industry. And the *Register* constantly dissects national and international stories for what it unself-consciously labels "the Iowa angle."

Along with the state fair, "We're one of the two things that unify Iowa," says reporter Ken Fuson, a native Iowan and ten-year *Register* veteran. But "the newspaper Iowa depends upon" (the slogan appears just below the flag on page one) is depending on less of Iowa these days.

Last year the Gannett-owned paper issued a "mission statement" asserting that its primary audience is not the entire state, as Gardner Cowles decreed when he bought it in 1903, but central Iowa. In February the *Register* announced it would no longer deliver the weekday paper in twenty-one western counties, (although some subscribers in sixteen of them could still get the paper by same-day mail).

Then, in March, the *Register* said it would close its Davenport bureau by July 1 (bureaus in Sioux City and Dubuque, on Iowa's western and eastern borders, respectively, were closed a few years ago), and raise the price of some of its editions that circulate beyond Des Moines by an unspecified amount. Pub-

CHRONICLE

lisher Charles C. Edwards, Jr., Cowles's great-grandson, said in a letter to staff members that further retrenchment was likely if circulation continued to fall, as it is expected to do. (When Gannett bought the paper for a reported \$165 million in 1985, circulation was 255,000 daily, 385,000 Sunday. In March, the paper reported, those figures had fallen to 209,000 and 343,000.)

The prospect of turning away from nearly nine decades of tradition alarmed editor Geneva Overholser so much that she considered quitting. "I thought, Do I

want to stay here and preside over this dismantling of a great newspaper?" she says. But after studying the options and listening to Edwards, Overholser enthusiastically endorsed the policy. In fact, she calls the problems associated with statewide circulation "an albatross" that has kept the *Register* from adequately covering its own backyard. "It's high time," she says, "that we cared more about whether we're writing well about

[Des Moines suburbs] Urbandale and Clive than whether we're writing as well as we used to about Sioux City and Burlington."

"We're coming to grips with the fact that we're a different state now," says managing editor David Westphal. For one thing, there are fewer Iowans — the state lost population during the '80s, and the exodus was most pronounced outside central Iowa. Advertising revenue from outlying counties eroded, while distribution costs, especially fuel, soared.

Interestingly, however, a committee of department heads had determined that, despite all these problems, the paper's statewide editions were not money-losers. But they are not significant money-makers either, apparently, and Edwards says it was time to make some "tough decisions," adding, "Clearly, the need is to be putting resources into our primary market." Those resources

include a larger local news hole and five new editorial positions to help fill it. (Despite its reputation, the *Register* has never been a strong local paper. None of its fifteen Pulitzer Prizes was awarded for local reporting, for example, although its editors can point to the Pulitzer it won this year in the public service category. That prize grew out of a local story in which rape victim Nancy Ziegenmeyer allowed reporter Jane Schorer to use her name in telling the story of the crime and its aftermath.)

Both Overholser and Edwards have emphasized that Gannett did not mandate the *Register's* new philosophy. However, Edwards adds, "[Gannett] has the right to have a reasonable return on the \$165 million they've spent."

Part of the price, it seems, is disappointment among some *Register* readers and journalists. "If the *Register* really is going to concentrate more on central Iowa local news, it will not be the great newspaper I looked forward to every day anyway, and I can probably live without it very well," wrote Rosalyn Smith of Sioux City, in a letter to the editor.

Ken Fuson, who grew up dreaming of working for the *Register*, doesn't see the paper's absolute decline and fall on the horizon. But he wonders if the emphasis on profits will accelerate the process. "Newspapers are killing themselves," he says.

Ira Lacher

Lacher, a former assistant sports editor at the *Register*, is an editor at Midwest Living.



Editor Geneva Overholser's first reaction to her paper's pullback was to consider quitting.

READ THEIR LIPS

THOSE ANONYMOUS
TELEPHONE "LETTERS TO THE EDITOR"

In Westminster, Maryland, one week this past December, the *Carroll County Times* printed 109 comments from readers on its editorial page. Ninety-six of them were phoned in anonymously and printed without signatures. The other thirteen were signed letters to the editor. Editorial page editor Michael Blankenheim, who says the paper initiated its "Readers' Hotline" last October, adds



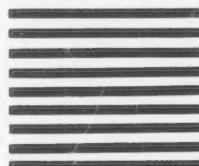
NO POSTAGE
NECESSARY
IF MAILED
IN THE
UNITED STATES

BUSINESS REPLY MAIL
FIRST CLASS PERMIT NO. 636 MARION, OHIO

POSTAGE WILL BE PAID BY ADDRESSEE

**COLUMBIA
JOURNALISM
REVIEW**

P.O. BOX 1943
MARION, OH 43306-2043



D ARTS AND L AURELS

◆ **LAUREL** to journalists like you who never hesitate to take advantage of a smart deal — like a year of CJR (6 issues) for only \$18.



Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Payment enclosed Please bill me

Add \$4 for Canadian and foreign subscription.
Please allow 4-6 weeks for delivery of your first copy.



"In some cases, journalists are a little too hung up on attribution"

David Greer,
News-Enterprise,
Elizabethtown,
Kentucky

Greer likens his "Editor's Hotline" to talk radio.

These papers are among a small but growing number of dailies and weeklies that have decided to open up their editorial pages (or feature pages in some cases) to readers who have opinions to offer but don't want to see their names or addresses attached to them.

Typically, readers phone in their anonymous comments to a tape recorder. The editors who use these hotlines emphasize that careful editing — for libel, taste, personal attack — is the key to a safe and successful hotline column.

Dan Warner, editor of the Lawrence, Massachusetts, *Eagle-Tribune*, says his paper receives about thirty "Sound Off" calls a day, about half of which are used. "We don't use any accusation, no matter how harmless it may seem, that has not [already] been public," he says. "So you can't call in and say, 'I think it's awful the mayor is beating his wife' unless he's already been charged with it."

David Greer says that, while he initially had qualms about using anonymous comments, "I've come to believe that, for a certain type of comment and opinion, attribution is not necessary. In some cases, journalists are a little too hung up on attribution, and [requiring it] frightens people away."

Not surprisingly, many editors recoil at the thought of filling their editorial pages with anonymous comments from readers. "I would never do that," says

that callers seem to be "spread across broad socioeconomic classes" and that most Hotline calls are "more personal and spontaneous" than signed letters. In

Elizabethtown, Kentucky, anonymous comments called in to the *News-Enterprise* have become so popular since the paper began accepting them last July that the 17,000-circulation daily recently decided to print them six days a week. Editor David

CHRONICLE

Jerry Dhomau, editorial page editor of the *Arkansas Gazette*. Dhomau, a former president of the National Conference of Editorial Writers, regards the growing use of reader hotlines as "more gimmickry than anything else. I just like to see names attached to letters. They tend to be more responsible that way."

Other editors worry about short-changing readers. "If you open up your letters to the editor section to blanket anonymity," says Ed Jones, managing editor of the Fredericksburg, Virginia, *Free Lance-Star*, "you'd be depriving your readers of important information they need to judge those opinions, as well as raising a question of fairness to the folks being criticized."

At Maryland's *Carroll County Times*, readers entered this debate in late February, after the "Readers' Hotline" published several anonymous comments critical of local community leaders. That touched off a war of words on the newspaper's editorial pages.

"Anything that is spoken or written anonymously is not worth hearing or reading," wrote one anti-Hotline reader, Kurt G. Wenzing, Jr. A pro-Hotline caller, meanwhile, hailed the column as "a great way to express one's opinion," and added some advice for offended community leaders: "The criticism comes with the office, people. Take it or leave it." The advice, of course, was



offered anonymously.

Journalists who favor reader hotlines say they see little difference between source anonymity that often goes unchallenged in news stories and reader anonymity on editorial pages. "Why is it controversial to take a quote from Joe Sixpack and run it anonymously when journalists routinely take anonymous quotes

from high-level jerks at the State Department and run them without a second thought?" asks Maura Casey, an editorial writer and columnist for the New London, Connecticut, *Day* — which, despite Casey's urging, has so far refused to open the editorial gates to anonymous callers.

Terence A. Dalton

Dalton is an assistant professor of journalism at Western Maryland College in Westminster.

"I just like to see names attached to letters. They tend to be more responsible that way"

Jerry Dhomau,
Arkansas
Gazette

EMFS AND CANCER

HOW DID THE PRESS DO WITH THE LATEST DATA?

In the final graph of "Uncovering Radiation: VDT Stories That Still Don't Make the News" (CJR, July/August 1990), Louis Slesin noted that "strong political forces are already lobbying the EPA to keep the lid on" a draft report recommending that extremely low magnetic fields be designated "probable human carcinogens." Slesin, editor of *Microwave News*, here provides an update on subsequent coverage (and uncoverage) of the electromagnetic fields-cancer story.

In December 1990, after three years of work (and weeks after its scheduled release date), the EPA's 460-page report on electromagnetic fields was still stuck

in the mail room as senior agency officials conferred with Bush administration officials on how and when the document should be released. What troubled them was its conclusion: that electromagnetic fields at certain extremely low frequencies might be causing higher cancer rates. Power lines, video display terminals, electric blankets, and the like are all sources of this type of electromagnetic field, or EMF.

On December 13, The Associated Press carried a story on the still-unissued report, and that evening the three broadcast networks aired stories on it. "The

report is so controversial," said NBC News correspondent Robert Hager, "that White House science adviser Allan Bromley and assistant secretary of health James Mason attempted, unsuccessfully, to get the wording watered down."

The next day, the AP story was headline news coast to coast. *USA Today* featured it on the front page, as did many local papers. *New York Newsday's* front page bore a banner headline reading ELECTROMAGNETIC TIE TO CANCER EYED. That day, December 14, the agency mailed out the report with a disclaimer: "Given the controversial and uncertain nature of the scientific findings ... this review draft should not be construed as representing agency policy."

On December 15, *The New York Times* weighed in with a story that reflected the views of two EPA officials who sought to downplay the cancer link. One of them, Dr. William Farland, contended that the effect of magnetic fields on the health of humans could not be very significant because, to quote reporter Philip J. Hilts's paraphrase, "the records of disease in this century do not show notable increases as the

electrification of the country went forward." (Interestingly, earlier that week the *Times* had provided information that might have prompted Hilts to challenge Dr. Farland's position. The headline of a December 11 piece by Natalie Angier, based on a report about to be published in the *American Journal of Industrial Medicine*, read SHARP RISE IN BRAIN CANCER RATES FOUND AMONG AMERICANS UNDER 45. A December 10 *Washington Post* front-page piece pegged to a related report was headed CANCER RATES IN INDUSTRIAL COUNTRIES RISE.)

The *Post's* account of the EPA report, which ran on December 20 on the paper's Federal Page, focused not on the health implications of the study but on the political struggle between the EPA and the president's science adviser. Another difference: unlike the *Times*, where references to video display terminals are consistently absent from stories about EMFs, the *Post* referred to this basic newsroom tool in the lead graph.

The *Los Angeles Times* waited even longer than the *Post* to deal with the EPA

report. The reason was that, since early November, Myron Levin had been looking at studies linking cancer and power lines, and his editors decided it would be best to let Levin discuss the new report in the context of his finished story. The article, which ran on December 24 under the headline CANCER AND POWER LINES — AN UNCERTAIN CONNECTION, marked the first time the *Times* had run a major EMF story.

Then the cancer story dropped out of sight for over a month. In early February, an important new University of Southern California study — this one funded by an industry group, the Electric Power Research Institute — was released. *The Wall Street Journal's* February 8 article, by Frederick Rose, began: "Preliminary results of a major new study have added evidence that proximity to electric transmission wires may increase the risk of childhood leukemia."

The New York Times's February 8 piece, by Sandra Blakeslee, began, reassuringly: "Preliminary results of a new scientific study show that childhood leukemia is not associated with normal household exposure to electromagnetic fields." Then, less reassuringly — and confusingly — it continued: "But, in a finding that scientists say is baffling, the cancer is associated with proximity to power lines and the use of certain appliances like hair dryers." (On April 2, Blakeslee returned to the subject in a lengthy piece whose subhead stated that cancer RISK IS SEEN AS SMALL, BUT THE QUESTION IS GAINING URGENCY.)

The *Los Angeles Times* of February 8 carried a piece by Levin on the new study; three days later the paper followed up with an editorial titled "Worries About Electromagnetic Fields," which concluded with this advice: "But don't let fear dominate your life. In effect, don't panic."

And *The Washington Post?* It covered the EMF debate in two Style-section pieces in March by consumer reporter David Streitfeld, one of which briefly described the big industry-funded study. Other than that, the *Post* ignored the study, perhaps reflecting Health-section science editor Larry Thompson's conviction, as expressed in the January/February *Washington Journalism Review*, that the EMF story has been "hyped" and "doesn't deserve coverage at all." ♦

We don't cover critical issues just to win awards. We have other reasons.

When our story, "Toxic Nightmare on Main Street," won four major awards for distinguished journalism, of course we were honored. But we didn't pursue this story just to win kudos. We did it for families. Babies. Moms and dads. We reported this story for each and every family whose health might now, or one day,

be affected by toxic contamination.

Our story certainly got attention. But more importantly, \$750,000 has been put aside for a major health study to determine the effects of contamination on families in Jacksonville, Arkansas. That's what we really wanted. And nothing honors us more than that we were able to make a difference.

Family Circle®



A Publication of The New York Times Company Magazine Group © 1991, The Family Circle, Inc.

DARTS AND LAURELS

Our wartime press

◆ DART for yellow (ribbon) journalism, to:

◆ the Fort Wayne, Indiana, *News-Sentinel*. In news accounts, editorials, and columns, the *News-Sentinel* relentlessly reminded the community of the contrast between the *News-Sentinel's* patriotic policies and those of the rival *Journal-Gazette*, whose editor, Craig Klugman, had decided to enforce his policy against displays of political sentiments by newsroom employees — including the wearing of yellow ribbons while inside the *Journal-Gazette* newsroom;

◆ *The Bakersfield Californian*. With similar zeal, the *Californian* had a page-one field day for three days running when an office clerk for a local hotel was ordered by her supervisor to remove a flag she had hung on the wall beside her desk. (The supervisor happened to be a native of Jordan; the flag happened to be a full-page reproduction from *The Bakersfield Californian*.) The ensuing brouhaha produced a full-page ad in the *Californian* from the beleaguered hotel, assuring the "citizens of Bakersfield" that hotel personnel support the troops "in many ways, including tying yellow ribbons throughout our hotels...." The ad also announced that the offending supervisor had been "reassigned" — a euphemism for having been "run out of town," as *Californian* columnist Herb Benham later put it in a piece decrying the "lynch-mob mentality" whipped up by the media (though he didn't mention his own paper by name);

◆ WDSU-TV, New Orleans, which opened its ten o'clock newscast on January 28 with what it seemed to regard as the sensational revelation that actor Woody Harrelson, who plays the bartender on *Cheers* and who had been selected to

be grand marshal of the Krewe of Endymion's Mardi Gras parade, had several days earlier attended a peace rally at UCLA, going so far as to be photographed standing next to antiwar activist Ron Kovic, author of *Born on the Fourth of July*; the segment strongly implied, as *Times-Picayune* media critic Mark Lorando wrote in his February 4 column, that Harrelson's antiwar sentiments made him unfit to lead the parade. Endymion leaders agreed and quickly replaced Harrelson with a new grand marshal, one presumably untainted by such an un-American activity as peaceful dissent.

◆ LAUREL to The

Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists and writers David Albright and Mark Hibbs, for a state-of-the-art report (March) on Saddam Hussein's nuclear capability — and on how, aided and abetted by the U.S. news media, that capability was exaggerated by the White House to generate support for its actions in the gulf. In "Iraq and the Bomb: Were They Even Close?" Albright and Hibbs itemize in massive detail the scores of complex components required to produce a nuclear bomb, measuring Iraq's known, unknown, or probable status on each; they conclude that at the time of its invasion of Kuwait, Iraq was five to ten years away from a useable device. In "Hyping the Iraqi Bomb," the authors show how, two days after a November 20 poll concluded that Americans would not go to war in the gulf to protect access to oil but would support a military effort to keep Iraq from getting the bomb, President Bush was publicly asserting that Iraq was only months away from possessing the ultimate weapon.



◆ DART for war-profiteering, to the Willoughby, Ohio, *News-Herald*, and *The Virginian-Pilot* and *The Ledger-Star*, Norfolk, Virginia. On January 25, the *News-Herald* announced a new weekly section of special three-inch photo messages "for loved ones in the armed forces" — at seventeen bucks a throw. On March 7, *The Virginian-Pilot* and



The Ledger-Star announced an upcoming "keepsake homecoming edition recounting important Gulf War events" and advised readers, "This is your place to let the military know how much you appreciate and support them." The price of a "message of support": three lines for \$6.00; with small flag illustration, \$9.75; with large flag, \$14.50.

◆ **DART** to Michael Hedges of *The Washington Times*, for getting too close to the story. Hedges opened his March 22 dispatch from Dhahran with the following revelation: "During the initial artillery bombardment of Iraq, I spontaneously took up a soldier's offer and flipped a switch that sent a dozen bomblet-filled rockets at Iraqi soldiers."

◆ **DART** for expanding the definition of "friendly fire," to the Kutztown, Pennsylvania, *Patriot*; to the Paso Robles, California, *Daily Press*; and to the *San Francisco Examiner*. Among the journalistic casualties of the war in the gulf:

◆ *Patriot* editor Joseph Reedy, fired after running an antiwar editorial (January 24) headed HOW ABOUT A LITTLE PEACE?;

◆ *Daily Press* reporter Paul Payne, fired after a friend of the paper's publisher complained about a scheduled piece (subsequently killed) on the profitable boom in locally produced flags, ribbons, bumper stickers, T-shirts, and other support-the-war paraphernalia;

◆ *Examiner* columnist Warren Hinckle, told to take a three-month unpaid furlough after he had submitted a January 17 piece (which never ran) on the "folly of the path to war."

◆ **DART** to *The Sacramento Bee*, for a graphic demonstration of how an unretouched photograph can distort the truth. The paper's full-page January 20 roundup on rallies for and against the war in the gulf was illustrated with four large photos, three of which featured solid, respectable-looking middle-class citizens demonstrating their support; the fourth (and, at 5-by-11 inches, the largest) photo, representing those who had participated in antiwar demonstrations — and who by all accounts were solid, respectable-looking, and middle-class — featured a lone punker who seemed dangerously close to the lunatic fringe.



◆ **DART** to KRON-TV, the NBC affiliate in San Francisco, for a self-serving salute to "America's newest heartthrob, NBC News correspondent Arthur Kent, who has been reporting on the war from Saudi Arabia." Distributed by the NBC News Channel to affiliates

around the country, the two-minute, nine-second segment (January 24) featured shots of the handsome reporter in Saudi Arabia, Romania, Afghanistan, and Italy, along with interviews with some of the Bay area "women of all ages" who, as one adoring fan put it, "just can't wait to see him on the evening news." The report also noted (in a statement not likely to repel the onslaught of Cupid's arrows — or diminish the station's ratings) that, according to Kent's agent, the thirty-five-year-old reporter is both "modest" and "single."

◆ **LAUREL** to *The New Republic*, for its consistently striking postwar insights. In his TRB column of March 18, senior editor Michael Kinsley tracked the shifting image of the weapon known as the "fuel-air explosive" as it evolved in the U.S. media — beginning last fall (when it was believed to be in Iraqi hands and not in the allied arsenal) as a horrific terrorist device, and ending in February (when it was being used by allied forces) as an experimental weapon whose function was limited primarily to the clearing of minefields and whose devastating effects on living beings was all but ignored. Then, in the March 25 issue, Washington writer David Segal tracked the career of the ubiquitous Middle East "expert" Judith Kipper (*Nightline*, *World News Tonight*, CNN, *MacNeil/Lehrer*, NPR, C-SPAN, etc.), and concluded that, lacking both credentials and expertise in her so-called field, Kipper's real skills are in networking, parlaying her M.A. in psychology, her p.r. background, and her contacts with the likes of Walter Cronkite and Peter Jennings into high-profile punditry. Finally, in his April 1 dispatch, "Highway to Hell," special correspondent Michael Kelly tracked a fifty-mile stretch of forgotten two-lane blacktop between secondary cities in Kuwait and Iraq ten days after the official cessation of hostilities, seeing for himself the "language of war" — the "techno-idolatrous jargon, the nonsensical euphemisms" of his military briefers — "made concrete." His searing account of the awful tableau, of "roasted vehicles" and "wizened, mummified charcoal-men" untouched except by wild dogs and birds of prey, stands (even in this age of instant and unedited video images) as haunting testimony to the unmatched power of the written word.

This column is compiled and written by Gloria Cooper, CJR's managing editor, to whom nominations should be addressed.



A large, stylized letter 'E' is positioned at the top left of the page. It has a thick, black, flowing font. The 'E' is partially cut off by the top edge of the page.

XCELLENCE IN

BROADCAST JOURNALISM

Entries are now being accepted for the 50th annual Alfred I. duPont-Columbia University Awards.

News and public affairs programs that originally aired between July 1, 1990 and June 30, 1991 are eligible. Awards are given for overall excellence in the following categories:

Television:

Network

Major Market, ADI 1-10

Medium Market, ADI 11-50

Small Market, ADI 51 and smaller

Cable

Radio

Independent Productions

Entry deadline: July 15, 1991.

For rules and entry form, contact:

Alfred I. duPont-Columbia University Awards
Graduate School of Journalism
Columbia University
New York, New York 10027
(212) 854-5974

NAME _____

TITLE _____

STATION _____

TELEPHONE _____

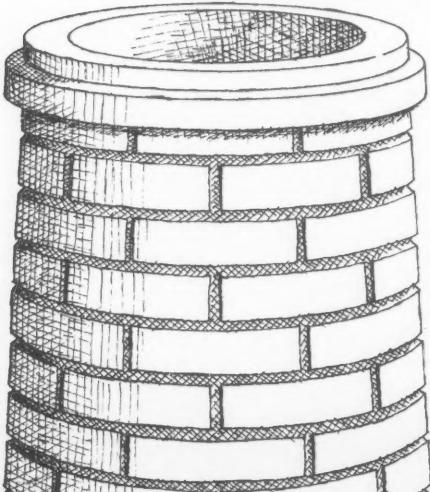
ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

STATE _____

ZIP _____

A fuming smokestack is the perfect symbol of our national dilemma. On one hand, it means the jobs and products we need. On the other, it means pollution. ☺ Some think having one without the other will take a miracle. We think it will take natural gas. ☺ Because gas, the cleanest of all fossil fuels, can reduce emissions across the board. You name it—CO, CO₂, NO_x, SO₂, particulates—and natural gas combustion produces none or substantially less. ☺ But gas is more than clean. It's extremely efficient as well. So even fewer pollutants are created since less fuel is expended to do a job. ☺ Which also reduces costs. And that's another argument favoring gas. It makes the fight against pollution more affordable. ☺ And, since nature blessed North America with vast stores of gas, it's a fight we can definitely win. With energy security and a better trade balance as a bonus. ☺ Natural gas. It's not the only answer. Just the best one we have right now.



WAR COVERAGE

DEBRIEFINGS

What we saw, what we learned

ANOTHER FRONT

BY MICHAEL MASSING

The war may be over, but the battle over press access rages. In a U.S. District Court in New York City, an eclectic group of news organizations, including *The Nation*, *Harper's*, and *The Village Voice*, is pressing a suit against the Defense Department, charging it with imposing unconstitutional restrictions during the gulf conflict.

In the current climate, the outcome of any contest between *The Nation* and the nation would seem foreordained. Yet the effort certainly seems worthwhile: if Dick Cheney and Colin Powell go unchallenged now, there's no telling what they or their successors might attempt in the future.

Looking back at the gulf conflict, though, it seems clear that access was not really the issue. Yes, the pools, the escorts, the clearance procedures were all terribly burdensome, but greater openness would not necessarily have produced better coverage.

Consider, for instance, the case of *New York Times* reporter Malcolm W. Browne. A veteran war correspondent, Browne was highly critical of the Pentagon's restrictions. "Each pool member," he declared in an article in the *Times*

Magazine, "is an unpaid employee of the Department of Defense, on whose behalf he or she prepares the news of the war for the outer world." To illustrate the point, Browne recounted his own experience as part of a pool taken to interview F-117A pilots returning from bombing raids over Iraq. In one dispatch, Browne's description of the F-117A as a "fighter-bomber" was changed to "fighter"; in another, a colleague's characterization of the pilots as "giddy" was changed to "proud." Browne was also kept from filing a story about the bombing of Iraq's nuclear weapons development plants, only to have General Norman Schwarzkopf make the information public two days later.

Browne's pique is understandable. But what does all this add up to? A sanitized adjective, an altered airplane description, a story delayed for a day. Not exactly the Pentagon Papers.

Of course, had Browne not been forced to join a pool, he might have turned up far more interesting material. I doubt it, though, judging from the work of those reporters who did manage to slip their minders and make it to the front. Telling of loneliness and boredom, cold nights and bad food, their stories offered moving glimpses of soldiers preparing for battle. Unfortunately, they added little to our understanding of the war itself.

Too often, American correspondents seemed to be fighting the last war. Where there was sand, they saw rice paddies, and, like latter-day David Halberstams, they instinctively headed for the front. This was no guerrilla war, however, but a high-intensity, fully conventional conflict, and it required something other than traditional on-the-ground reporting. In

Michael Massing, a contributing editor of CJR, also writes for The New York Review of Books and The New York Times Magazine.

particular, it required an ability to digest and make sense of the huge amount of data generated by the conflict.

Take the air war. The general lack of access to Iraq made gathering firsthand information all but impossible. And the press briefings in Riyadh and Washington, with their *Top Gun* videos, offered little help. Yet the sheer number of bombing raids indicated that something extraordinary was going on over Iraq. The Pentagon insisted it was targeting only military-related facilities, but the attacks on power plants, oil refineries, and other elements of the country's infrastructure suggested a far more destructive plan — one designed to return Iraq to "a pre-industrial age," as a U.N. report subsequently put it. What was the Pentagon's purpose in all this? And was it consistent with the U.N. resolution authorizing the use of force to liberate Kuwait? Reporters — busy talking their way through military checkpoints — never bothered to ask.

Nor did they ponder the extent of the killing being carried out by allied forces. True, it was mostly enemy soldiers who were being killed, and that's what war is all about. Yet many of the victims were hapless conscripts sent to the front against their will, and the policy of slaughtering them seemed to demand some analysis. This was not a simple task, given the refusal of U.S. briefers to estimate enemy KIAs. Yet, by extrapolating from the number of sorties flown, the amount of ordnance dropped, and the "killing box" strategy pursued by the B-52s and other aircraft, reporters could have offered some rough estimates of their own. Busy interviewing grunts at the front, they just didn't have the time.

Similarly, the press failed to scrutinize the types of weapons deployed by the allies. While reporting endlessly on the chemical-weapons threat from Iraq — a threat that never materialized — correspondents showed little interest in America's own fearsome weapons. Like napalm. For the first time since Vietnam, the U.S. forces used this flesh-searing substance, mostly to kill Iraqi troops in bunkers. In light of the outcry over the use of napalm in Vietnam, one might have expected questions to be raised about its use in the gulf. Yet the few stories that mentioned the subject seemed entirely perfunctory in nature. **ALLIES ARE SAID TO CHOOSE NAPALM FOR STRIKES ON IRAQI FORTIFICATIONS** ran the headline over a story in *The New York Times* on February 23. Only eight paragraphs long, the article explained that

a wave of napalm-fueled fire splashed across the mouths of a system of caves or trenchworks may fail to burn the occupants but can remove so much oxygen from the air that the defenders suffocate. For this reason, some opponents of its use have argued that napalm should be classified as a chemical weapon and banned.

Nevertheless, napalm remains a mainstay of armies and air forces throughout the world, and has been used in many wars and minor conflicts since it was introduced in World War II....

That article was written by Malcolm Browne.

To get at the real story in the gulf, reporters did not have to travel to the front. They did not even have to travel to Saudi Arabia. Most of the information they needed was available in Washington. All that was required was an independent mind willing to dig into it. In short, this war needed fewer David Halberstams and more I.F. Stones. ♦

THE POOL

BY WILLIAM BOOT

I was a combat pool correspondent, one of the happy few who helped provide America with what Pentagon spokesman Pete Williams called "the best war coverage we've ever had." True, most of us never saw a battle and few of us even saw a dead Iraqi soldier, but at least we got to be part of the big adventure. True, many of our dispatches never made it back to our news organizations, but at least we got to write them. True, military officers controlled our every movement, but that, after all, may be why Williams bestowed his glowing praise, and pool veterans should not take compliments lightly. To help put Williams's tribute in perspective, here is a day-by-day account of what it was like to cover a ground war under the pool system.

February 19 - Dhahran International Hotel. Correspondents line up at a U.S. military supply room, hoping to draw the helmets, flak vests, chemical suits, and other gear required to protect them in the field.

"If you can get the gear yourself [that is, from an independent source] you're good to go," says a supply sergeant.

"So it's available independently?" asks a reporter.

"No, only from us." Catch-22.

At the last minute, an army officer announces that the rules have been relaxed: full protective trappings are not required now. Any gear unavailable today will be issued in the field.

February 20 - I board a transport plane for the army's Seventh Corps headquarters minus rubber anti-chemical boots — an essential item in the Desert Storm wardrobe. Upon arrival, we are told by a spokesman, Major David Cook, that Seventh Corps is, in fact, *not* prepared to supply missing gear. Anti-chemical boots are in especially short supply.

February 21 - With a reporter from *The New York Times* and an AP correspondent, I embark in a Humvee truck on a lurching two-hour journey across the desert. We are headed for the Iraqi border to visit the Second Armored Cavalry Regiment, which we are told will spearhead the most significant American ground assault of the war. The reporters ride in back. In front are two military escorts — Captain John Koko, thirty-three, and Sergeant Roy Botkins, twenty-nine, both reservists from Kentucky. Each carries a loaded M-16 rifle and a box of Cracker Jack. Koko, a fount of wisecracks, is gung-ho about the profession of arms, but contemptuous of his current assignment as a "P.A.O. [public affairs officer] puke." He sings snatches of the Army recruiting jingle, "Be all that you can be."

William Boot is the pen name of Christopher Hanson, a contributing editor of *CJR* and the Washington correspondent for the Seattle Post-Intelligencer.



THE CONQUERED Iraqi soldiers surrendering in Kuwait

Under canvas later on, Koko discusses his unique approach to public affairs at the front. "My job is rumor control," he says, and then gives his interpretation of that duty: he controls rumors by spreading them himself. It's all part of the continuing effort to relieve boredom. Koko seems especially proud of his part in spreading one rumor: a soldier uses a gas mask pouch as a pillow, but as he shifts position during the night the pressure of his head accidentally triggers an antidote syringe needle in the pouch. It punctures the soldier's neck, killing him instantly.

Koko — who stands about six foot four and once served as an Army Ranger — is now in high gear, regaling us with tales of how he has been patrolling Seventh Corps territory, apprehending reporters who had made their way to the front without permission. He dutifully, if reluctantly,

stops Americans, but truly gets a charge out of busting French and especially Italian reporters, because, in his view, neither country is contributing enough to the war effort.

Ironically, news organizations themselves may have done even more than enforcers like Koko to thwart reporters trying to cover the war. The Pentagon, shrewdly enough, had delegated to U.S. news media in Dhahran many decisions on who got pool slots. In early January, the "sacred sixteen" — *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, Cox, Gannett, *The Wall Street Journal*, and other papers that had kept reporters in Saudi Arabia continuously since late 1990 — voted to keep pool slots for themselves. Bitter fights with newcomers resulted. (Eventually, the Defense Department created new pool slots to accommodate some of the newcomers.) All told, reporters seemed to spend more energy fighting each other than fighting pool restrictions.

February 22 - At breakfast I seek soldiers' reactions to the latest reports that Iraq has offered to withdraw from Kuwait, raising last-minute talk of a peace settlement. One soldier tells me he would just as soon go ahead with the ground offensive because he has just had his head shaved and doesn't want to be seen back home until it grows out. At that point, Koko comes up and gently rebukes me for talking to troops without a military escort.

Next, we get a lesson in just how well the military's communication system for field reporters actually works. With Koko supervising, we three reporters interview the only woman in camp, a sergeant whose classified intelligence duties make her the female closest to Iraqi lines. She is tough and articulate and it all makes for a nice story. The only problem is that, after I write my piece and send it back to headquarters in a Humvee, it disappears. It never reaches

Dhahran, never is issued as a pool report, never gets to my editors. (*The Wall Street Journal's* John Fialka tells me later that my experience is typical — "Seventh Corps was simply a black hole.")

February 23 - Word is that the Second Armored Cavalry does not want reporters along on the ground offensive. But the regimental spokesman, Captain Bob Dobson, says this restriction applies only to TV crews. He can take one "pencil" and agrees to take me, but only if I agree to his terms — I can go only where Dobson goes and must never venture out by myself. No other escorts are available. Koko and Botkins will be returning to headquarters. Reluctantly, I agree to the terms. The alternative is sitting out the war in the rear. Captain Dobson is now my assignment editor.

February 24 - At dawn, the Second Armored Cavalry

convos form up and move out across the misty desert into Iraq. I ride with Dobson, twenty-nine, a bright, portly West Pointer with a passion for junk food, who gives me a running commentary on the regiment and its role in the war.

Later, we are ordered to don our chemical-weapons protective suits (I have by now managed to scrounge a pair of the special boots). I then write a story in which soldiers react to the prospect of gas warfare and — almost to a man — urge nuclear retaliation if Iraq uses chemicals. No couriers are available. We have outstripped our lines of communication. The only option for filing stories is the regiment's "E-mail" computer system, which in theory can send articles to headquarters via satellite. But the system is on the blink, and remains so for days. My newspaper does not get this dispatch until February 28, when it is far too stale to use.

February 25 - A day of massive prisoner-taking and sporadic fighting, including a small engagement just a few hundred yards off to the right of the regimental headquarters column. Dramatic stuff for a newcomer to war, and I write a colorful piece on taking prisoners. Of course, it cannot be filed due to technical difficulties.

At one point, Dobson's public affairs vehicle is bouncing along a rutted track, past a cluster of Iraqis who have just surrendered. They wave and smile. We wave and smile. Then the Humvee hits a huge bump, spilling a good part of its load in front of the Iraqis. It is hard not to feel embarrassed.

The convoy lurches on. I ask Dobson if we can break away from the headquarters detachment and join one of the regiment's squadrons of M-1 tanks and Bradley Fighting Vehicles, which are seeing the real action up ahead. He says he'll try to accommodate me eventually, but can't promise anything. We drive on into the night. At last the convoy halts and circles up. The soldiers dig in as American tank cannons and artillery thunder away nearby. I spend the night sitting up in the Humvee, horrified that the war might be over before I can transmit even one good story.

February 26 - A day of excitement, confusion, and frustration. Reports reach headquarters by radio that the regiment's armored squadrons up ahead are engaging Republican Guard tank units. The regiment's assignment, says Dobson, is to locate the main elements of the guard and engage them in battle until heavier U.S. units can move up to finish them off. After pausing during a sandstorm, with seventy m.p.h. winds, the headquarters column moves off, only to reverse direction and hastily retreat because Iraqi tanks have supposedly been spotted up ahead. Night finds us dug in, watching a light show of explosions and flames along the horizon. The regiment's heavy armor is battling the Republican Guards along a twenty-mile front, but from this distance I can make no sense of the action. What could have been my biggest story ever is playing itself out, and I'm missing it.

February 27 - Dobson gets an update on the battle from the regiment's operations center and gives me a briefing — it seems an entire Republican Guard division has been annihilated. I write a story on the battle. This time, with Dobson's help, I actually manage to file it over the computer hookup, along with all the other hoary dispatches that have stacked up.

Later, with the column having paused to rest up, Dobson and I and a couple of Air Force liaison officers drive off to inspect the hulk of an Iraqi armored personnel carrier, which has been knocked out by a U.S. aircraft missile. The Iraqi inside the vehicle has been burned beyond recognition. A gunner who sat atop the carrier has been thrown clear but torn nearly in half and horribly mutilated in other ways. I take detailed notes.

"What angle are you planning to use?" asks Dobson. When I make a noncommittal reply, he says, "Here's the angle I would use: There is no glory in war.... No one will ever know what happened to these two. Their families will never know. The sand is already covering that [gunner's] body." He shakes his head.

My assignment editor seems to have good news judgment. I take his advice. The problem is that the piece I write is quite graphic, just the sort of story that the Defense Department — with its smart-bomb videos that make combat seem bloodless — has been trying to avoid. Will this dispatch survive the censor's blue pencil?

*Reluctantly, I agree to the terms.
The alternative
is sitting out the war in the rear.
Captain Dobson is
now my assignment editor*

As things turn out, the dispatch gets through unaltered and no high-ranking meddler comes after me. But this may be because the war is all but over.

A more telling case is probably that of *Los Angeles Times* reporter John Balzar, who was assigned to cover a helicopter aviation brigade in the Eighteenth Army Corps. Before the ground offensive started, his unit was conducting night attacks into Iraq. Apache helicopter pilots allowed Balzar to view infra-red gun-camera footage of one of these raids.

Here is a sample of what he reported shortly before the ground war was launched:

Through the powerful night-vision gunsights they looked like ghostly sheep, flushed from a pen — Iraqi infantry soldiers bewildered and terrified, jarred from sleep and fleeing their bunkers under a hellstorm of fire.

One by one they were cut down by attackers they couldn't see or understand. Some were literally blown to bits by bursts of 30mm exploding cannon shells. One man dropped, writhed on the ground, and struggled to his feet. Another burst tore him apart. A compatriot twice emerged standing from bursts. As if in pity, the American attackers turned and let him live....

This pool report was not censored by the Defense Department, but after it was filed Balzar and the other members of his pool were, in effect, grounded. They were taken to see no combat and spent much of the ground offensive sitting around in a tent.

February 28 - My priority today is to interview the soldiers who had fought in Tuesday night's fierce tank battle and to file an after-action report. But Dobson's priority is to collect Iraqi weapons from the battlefield for the regimental museum. So that, needless to say, is what we do. I take notes as Dobson and three Air Force liaison officers, with .45s at the ready, clear Iraqi bunkers (no Iraqis are to be seen) and haul off booty. From one bunker the Air Force men liberate a twenty-six-inch Sanyo color TV set with stereophonic sound.

For much of the day I ride with a young Air Force captain. He, and not Dobson, now sets my news agenda. At one point, he asks, "Would you like a Pop-Tart?" But he can't find the box. It has fallen off the back of the truck and is lost. The captain is crestfallen. As he drives along, he speaks with a consuming intensity of his fondness of Pop-Tarts, a snack with the flavor of home. Suddenly his eyes bulge. He realizes that he has blundered into a dense field of unexploded cluster bomblets dropped by U.S. planes. Slowly, with great care, he eases the truck through the field. When it's finally evident that he has pulled us through intact, he pauses and says softly, as if to himself, "That really burns me out about the Pop-Tarts."

It's unclear what my lead for today should be — the Sanyo TV or the Pop-Tarts. I lean toward the latter.

March 4 - After a journey by helicopter and transport plane, I arrive back at the Dhahran International Hotel. The American Military Police at the front door search my bags far more carefully than they had when I arrived two weeks before. The reason for this thoroughness, explains one M.P., is that journalists back from battlefields have been showing up with some interesting souvenirs. He says one member of a CBS crew came in with three Iraqi hand grenades. They turned out to be the trip-wire type, which go off the instant you pull the pin. Other journalists, whom he declined to identify, came in with pistols and anti-tank weapons, and one had four volatile blasting caps in her pocket. The M.P. says he has come to question whether the American press corps has very good judgment.

Back in the hotel, I discuss my pool experience with colleagues and conclude that, astonishingly enough, I have had relatively good luck with the system. Some reporters covering Seventh Corps got no dispatches back at all. A great many — and this applied to the entire theater of operations — were far from any combat whatsoever; they will be traumatized for years to come not by what they saw of this war, but by what they didn't see.

In the final reckoning, I'm left with this question: Was joining a pool really worth the aggravation? It's a close call, but probably it was in those cases where you actually got to cover some fighting. On the other hand, those passed over for pool slots were not necessarily the losers. Consider *The New Republic*'s Michael Kelly, who was told he would not get a ground combat pool assignment and opted to go on his own. He and a Baltimore *Sun* reporter drove across the desert toward Kuwait City, ahead of the allied forces. Kelly's poignant March 18 account of desperate, surrendering Iraqis, begging reporters to take them into custody, made far better reading than any pool report I saw during the entire war. ♦

THE UNILATERALS

BY CHRIS HEDGES

On January 18, the day I arrived in Saudi Arabia, I was informed that the U.S. Armed Forces Joint Information Bureau had only one pool slot for *The New York Times*. This meant that I and three other *Times* reporters would have to sit through briefings in Riyadh, work the military for information, and rewrite pool reports that filtered in from the field.

This hardly seemed an auspicious way to cover a war, so the next morning, after receiving permission from R.W. Apple, Jr., who ran our coverage from Dhahran, I climbed into a jeep with several British reporters and headed for the border city of Khafji.

I would never return to work within the system. For two months several colleagues and I bluffed our way through roadblocks, slept in Arab homes, and cajoled ourselves into units. Eventually, following armored battalions in our jeeps through breached minefields to the outskirts of Kuwait City, we raced across the last stretch of open desert and into the capital before it was liberated. Our success was due in part to an understanding by many soldiers and officers of what the role of a free press is in a democracy. These men and women violated orders to allow us to do our job.

In the beginning I drove back from wherever I was to Dhahran to file, but these six-to-eight-hour trips, through half a dozen checkpoints, began to eat up too much time. In early February, several of us rented jeeps with cellular phones that could make the international calls needed for fil-

Chris Hedges with Egyptian troops on the Kuwaiti border



ing stories. We filled our jeeps with bottled water and food, and began to spend days, and eventually weeks, in the field. I obtained permission from several Saudi families, with whom I spoke in Arabic, to sleep on their floors. Sometimes I stayed with soldiers in the field, sometimes in depressing truck stops. It was lonely, often frustrating work. There were days when, after spending hours lost in the desert, I had little to show for it.

Late one evening, hopelessly lost near the Kuwaiti border, I came upon a long armored column snaking its way north with its lights out. Officers suggested I follow, and I did.

After a lengthy drive, we gunned our vehicles up over twelve-foot-high sand embankments and parked. I got out to meet a lanky captain and several lieutenants. I had stumbled onto the headquarters of the Sixth Marine Division and the captain made it clear that I was to be handed over to the military police.

But while we waited I chatted with the officers,

*The supply officers gave me
a desert camouflage uniform and
a flak jacket. It was now impossible
to tell that I was a reporter*

explaining why I had broken the rules and expressing my thoughts about the need for an independent press, even in wartime. The radio crackled. The captain went over to answer it. He returned in a few minutes. "The M.P.s are on their way," he said. Then, "Get in your jeep," he said slowly, "and haul ass."

I was able to spend several days, with the permission of officers, with units preparing for war. Troops in the field usually received the press warmly. Many had spent months in the desert and welcomed the chance to tell their stories. Most had little affection for the public relations officers.

I spent some time with one infantry battalion and got to know many of its officers and soldiers well. I brought them daily papers when I visited, and later I phoned messages to some of their families. When the battalion was ordered to move up to the Kuwaiti border, the commander painstakingly drew me a map so I could find the new position.

When I showed up one February morning, I was taken to the commander's foxhole.

"The order has come down that there is to be no unescorted press here," he began. My heart sank. "I won't tell you how I personally feel about this," he went on, then paused for a few moments and continued: "As far as I go, you are not here. You must park your car away from the camp. If other officers come in you must keep away, and if you get caught you were here because you were lost and

Chris Hedges, a reporter for The New York Times, has covered several wars and regional conflicts. He was one of the forty reporters captured and detained by Iraqi soldiers at the end of the war.

were looking for directions." It was agreed that I would never quote him by name or identify his battalion.

By February the order had gone out that M.P.s were to detain all members of the press found north of Dhahran and to confiscate their credentials. So while at first we had been able to run roadblocks so long as we wore khaki dress, now more and more cars were being stopped. One soldier gave me a helmet, which helped immensely.

By working outside the pool, we could speak with soldiers without the presence of an escort. This did not always mean that we wrote stories that criticized the military, although people were more likely to speak openly if they thought their conversations were not being monitored.

The fine stories on the Egyptian forces filed by Forrest Sawyer of ABC News and Tony Horwitz of *The Wall Street Journal*, for example, could only have been done by going outside the system. Managed information always has an unreal, stale quality. And while none of us broke scandals or uncovered gross abuses, we were able to present an uncensored picture of life at the front.

It is worth remembering that during the first twenty-four hours of the fighting in Khafji in February the allied command insisted that only Arab forces were battling the Iraqis. They changed their story after an AP reporter climbed into a U.S. armored personnel carrier and drove into the city, where he witnessed marines engaging Iraqi troops. The U.S. wanted to build the confidence of the Arab forces, but at the expense of the truth.

I spent time in a ten-acre supply depot and wrote an account of how supply officers barter, beg, and pilfer to get what they need for their men. The article, which I had tried to keep whimsical, failed to amuse a few Marine Corps generals when they read it in the *Times*.

The battalion commander of the two officers I quoted in the piece, a man who knew nothing of my visit, was called in by his commanding general and told to keep reporters out

*The captain said I was under
detention.
When I protested, one of the pool
reporters told me to be quiet*

of his unit if he wanted to keep his command. Apparently, his superiors had used a computer list to trace the names in the story to his unit.

An unexpected bonus resulting from this article was that the supply officers gave me a desert camouflage uniform and a flak jacket. It was now impossible for anyone who did not question me directly to tell that I was a reporter. Just before I drove away, one of the men reached down and took the blousers off his trousers. "Marines blouse," he said, putting the two elastic bands in my hand.

I ran into trouble, however, a day later. I had just finished reporting a story about how, with the influx of soldiers, Saudi shopkeepers had tripled and quadrupled prices. The price-gauging was galling to the troops who, after all, had

come as allies. This was the type of story that, although it had no military or strategic significance, would rarely get by a public affairs officer.

On my way back from the shops, I stopped to talk to some officers who ran a field hospital, in the hope that I might be able to write a story about how nurses and doctors whiled away their time waiting for the ground war to begin. But by this time, although I didn't know it, reporters were not just to be turned away from units when they showed up, but arrested. The hospital officials assigned an armed escort to me and I was driven to the headquarters of the Seventh Corps, some ten miles away.

I was taken to the trailers that made up the press center and turned over to a Captain Miller. A few pool reporters were seated at a picnic table. The captain said I was under detention. When I protested, one of the pool reporters told me to be quiet.

"You can't talk to him like that," he said. "They'll take away your credentials for good."

A captain, armed with an M-16, was placed in the front seat of my car and a lieutenant in a truck in front of me, and I was escorted to King Khaled Military City. At the end of the two-hour trip, I was turned over to a Captain Archie Davis, who confiscated my Saudi press card. He told me that the rules were for my own good, that he and the other officers were just trying to protect me from the hazards of war. "There are a lot of soldiers out there with pretty itchy trigger fingers," he said.

I was sent back to the Joint Information Bureau in Dhahran, an eight-hour drive, to retrieve the press card from a Major William Fellows. "You have an attitude problem," he told me. But he returned the card.

More than a dozen of us, labeled "the unilaterals" by the military press office, had now been detained by military police. We had to decide whether to risk expulsion or abide by the rules. The next day I left without an escort, violating the rules again.

Those of us outside the system were now in a precarious position. We could be arrested for even approaching a unit. In the last weeks before the ground war, I filed stories on the Egyptian and Czechoslovakian contingents and one on a New York National Guard transportation unit known as the Harlem Hell Fighters, a group whose members felt they had been ill treated by the army. Two months earlier they had sent in an official request, which had never been answered, asking that a reporter from a New York newspaper be allowed to visit them.

The ground war was now only days away, and the military police were frequently stopping cars along the road that ran east to west along the Kuwaiti and Iraqi border. By this time, I had my hair cut to military regulations, my jeep marked with the inverted "V" that was on all military vehicles, and a large orange cloth tied to the roof to identify it as part of the allied force. I carried canteens and even a knife, the gift of some marines. I was waved through check points.

By the time the attack was launched, the JIB had issued new regulations: no reporters were allowed to wear military dress, to use cellular phones to file stories, or to mark their vehicles. The new rules came a little late. ♦

ARNETT

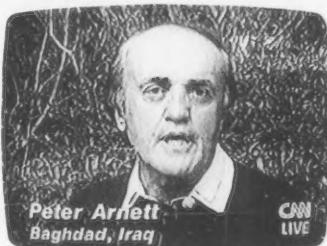
BY WALTER GOODMAN

Peter Arnett spent the days and weeks after leaving Baghdad early in March, when all Western reporters were invited out, answering the criticisms that his presence there throughout the war had brought down on him and his employer, the Cable News Network. By turns defiant and defensive, the correspondent upheld his role even as he acknowledged that the sort of journalism he had practiced, or been permitted to practice, had been severely circumscribed.

What exactly was the role that Arnett and the other correspondents in Baghdad played and why did it create its own desert storm? Much of the abuse was strictly political. The Scuds came mainly from the right, from Reed Irvine of Accuracy in Media, whose mission it is to expose what he deems to be the prevailing leftism of press and television, and Senator Alan K. Simpson, the Wyoming Republican, who evidently did not like having pictures of civilian victims of the American bombings on the tube, lest they get in the way of public support for the administration. As even Simpson seemed belatedly to have recognized, their attacks were personal and nasty. (Arnett told an audience at the National Press Club that when he was reporting from Jerusalem before the war, Simpson and other senators had upbraided him and other correspondents for being too critical of Saddam Hussein.)

A surprisingly high-pitched comment came from Jim Wooten, a columnist for *The Atlanta Journal* (not the ABC correspondent), who drew a distinction between CNN, which broadcasts to the world, and networks that serve mainly the United States, where viewers have access to a range of information. He wrote: "CNN, however noble its intentions, while in Iraq is part of the controlled press and could be a legitimate target for electronic jamming by the allies." Then there was sniping from competitors against the man who had the beat to himself for a considerable period. When other network reporters were allowed into the city, however, their dispatches were not all that different from Arnett's.

Arnett's champions, such as his friend David Halberstam, rebutted with credential-mongering. They reminded us of Vietnam, where Arnett won a Pulitzer Prize, and spoke of



Walter Goodman is a television critic for The New York Times.

his integrity and his courage. The nature of his current coverage was hardly mentioned. Opponents of the war (yes, there really were some back in January) also came to the defense, in hopes perhaps that reports like Arnett's might produce a Vietnam effect. In any case, the concentration on the individual drew attention away from the predicament: Should American journalists be in enemy territory, sending home dispatches under the eye of the enemy censor? Is there any way to do that without abetting the enemy? Is there value to an American audience in hearing even inherently loaded reports?

The first and last questions seem to me easy. By remaining in Baghdad, Peter Arnett was doing what any journalist would do, and by trying to get into the city, the other network news departments were doing likewise, and good luck to them. As Arnett told Larry King after he left Iraq, "I was in Baghdad for the people who look at CNN"—not for the United States government.

An on-the-ground presence in Baghdad was particularly valuable given the nature of the air campaign (how do you report it if you can't see where the bombs land?) and the Pentagon's control of information. Applying the tactics that had kept reporters at bay in Grenada and Panama, the military effectively shaped coverage from the beginning to the end of the gulf war. That encouraged the natural wartime disposition to celebrate Our Brave Men and Women and censure, or even censor, anyone who didn't pitch in heartily enough.

The notion of American correspondents reciting reports approved by the enemy is uncomfortable, but noncoverage is not an attractive alternative. The best the journalist can do in enemy territory is to make plain to viewers and readers the conditions under which he or she is permitted to operate and try to slip in more information than the minders have in mind. Which gets us back to Baghdad.

Accompanying every dispatch from Iraq on all networks were notices that censorship prevailed. It also prevailed to some extent in Saudi Arabia, Israel, and Washington. Yet what bothered even friendly critics of Arnett and his colleagues was their failure to make clear enough that they were being used expressly to report on civilian casualties. Some did try. As the CBS screen was taken up with a child in a hospital bed, for example, Betsy Aaron said, "In a hospital, the most innocent of victims is shown to the cameras." In the nature of things, the picture overwhelmed the wink, but the wink was there.

Talking with Frank Sesno of CNN as he was leaving Baghdad on March 6, Arnett conceded that the authorities had allowed him to stay so that he could tell about civilian casualties. He said he had lobbied for more information, but to little avail. In an interview with Sam Donaldson on ABC's *Prime Time Live*, Arnett spelled out just how tight the control was: "From the beginning I accepted the constraints that the Iraqis laid down. They said, 'Anything you do, you put on paper. We go over it, and we alter it. We change it if we wish to, and that's what you're going to use.'"

To viewers around the world, it must have seemed that Saddam Hussein could have nothing to complain about in Arnett's performance. Whether it was a description of a



THE ROUT *The remains of an Iraqi, one of many killed as they fled north on the road from Kuwait City*

bombed milk factory (could it have been a laboratory for bacteriological weapons?) or of what he called a civilian air raid shelter (could it also have been a military control center?), his reports never contradicted the Iraqi line.

Taken to a neighborhood where he was told that twenty-four civilians had been killed and the screen showed a framed photograph of a child in the debris of a house, he said he had seen only homes and a school, no mention of any munitions depot or military communications site or chemical-warfare plant that the Pentagon said were in the vicinity. But, of course, it was understood that military targets must not be mentioned. As Wooten wrote: "Take a reporter to a scene where civilians are suffering, tell him to say anything he wants about it, so long as he does not convey information of military value and you have ground rules that make fair and accurate reporting impossible." Describing hits near Iraqi holy places, Arnett went so far as to use the verb "targeted," as though pilots had been aiming at them.

In a self-gratulatory apologia that appeared in *The Washington Post* when he had left Baghdad, Arnett wrote that his daily question-and-answer exchanges with the CNN anchor after he had delivered his Iraqi-approved script "saved my credibility and made my presence in Baghdad a valuable one." For example, he was able to report on what he could see along the way to the destinations that had been selected for him. In his National Press Club talk, he gave the



J. Langervin/Sygma

impression that his minders grew panicky over these Q-and-As. His hints about the presence of military vehicles and his observations of daily life were welcome, but even here, it seemed to this viewer, he either did not see much of interest or was reluctant to try the patience of his hosts. The questions, which alerted viewers to how closely Arnett was controlled, were more informative than the answers.

For a time, ABC's Bill Blakemore was going around Baghdad interviewing residents. They were all amiable, serving coffee and so forth, and he said he felt they were speaking frankly despite the presence of an Iraqi official who, he assured viewers, was not in uniform and who stayed in the background. The men on the street and on camera said nothing unkind about their regime or its invasion of Kuwait.

Now, listen to Arnett as he is being kicked out of the country: "We don't get any really honest appraisals on camera because when we give an — have an interview in the street, there is a ministry of information official standing with us. You know, the conversation is being monitored." Only at the end, with his monitor "being very, very tolerant," was he able to say that once President Hussein had suggested a conditional withdrawal, "the public, to a person, was commenting that they didn't really need to be in Kuwait, that they wanted an end to the war."

Some of the correspondents in Baghdad apparently got to be on friendly terms with their minders, so much so that

toward the end Arnett told his CNN interviewer that he would prefer to hold off talking about public feelings in Iraq until he reached Amman, "where I don't necessarily have to embarrass any local official, Frank." A reporter reluctant to embarrass a local official? The delicate concern wore off as soon as Arnett was out of the country. If Baghdad was monitoring his talk to the National Press Club, those minders might have been highly embarrassed, since he referred to their criticisms of the Hussein regime and singled out one who, he said, allowed him to deliver an uncensored report on his final night in Iraq.

Set aside the cheap innuendos of disloyalty. And set aside, too, Jim Wooten's proposition that CNN reports from Iraq should be blocked lest they force a shift in military strategy for political reasons, which is an invitation to a censorship party — an invitation that is all the more disturbing coming from a newspaperman. A journalist who decides that his job is to help win a war, rather than just to describe it, is better off enlisting.

It was important for Arnett, Blakemore, and the others to be in Baghdad. It was important that people see something more of the consequences of the bombing than the photographs through targeting cross hairs beloved of Pentagon warriors. Nothing is harder or more essential to remember in the heat of war than that the other side is made up of human beings, too.

What was missing from most of the Baghdad reports was a degree of distance from the approved material, a touch of the skepticism that Washington reporters lay on when talking about American politicians. Wherefore the untypical deference? Were the correspondents afraid they would be kicked out if they hedged their reports a bit? Were they carried away by the professional temptation to squeeze emotion from scenes of pain? Were they feeling normal sympathy for people under attack?

As he was leaving Baghdad, Arnett replied to critics that he felt "very proud to be an eyewitness so the rest of the world would know how its policy was being implemented." That's nice. And he added, "I think the record will show the policy was implemented pretty effectively." His stint in Iraq over, was Arnett doing some repositioning?

All right, the coverage from Baghdad was only part of television's effort; Washington and Riyadh supplied most of the news. And judging Arnett and Blakemore and the other television reporters in Baghdad from afar is an easier assignment than the one they carried out, under tough conditions and with admirable perseverance. Yet aspects of their performance remain troubling, not from a patriotic point of view but from a professional one. The question nags, whether they adapted too readily to their host's scenario, whether they might not have found more ways to talk to viewers over, behind, beneath, and around those friendly minders.

In his *Washington Post* piece, Arnett told of "long and sometimes heated" arguments with the Iraqis and added, "I sometimes had my bags half-packed to leave." It's a close call: I can't fault any correspondent for staying on, but if Arnett had in fact been ejected for doing the journalist's job instead of the regime's, well, that would have been illuminating, too. ♦

THE DEAD

BY LAURIE GARRETT

When Jordan TV news anchor Rabah Rousan showed up for work on February 13, she had not yet heard the news of the bombing of the Baghdad air-raid shelter. A seemingly endless series of minor calamities, including the breakdown of her car, had left her out of touch with events until, at 6 P.M., she strolled into JTV headquarters on the outskirts of Amman.

"I walked into the newsroom and everyone was standing. There were tears in their eyes, people were shaking, some sobbing, and I said, 'What's wrong?'" Rousan recalls.

What had upset the JTV news staff was their viewing of more than half an hour of videotape, most of which the world's public — including Jordanian viewers — has never seen. (JTV did air far more graphic clips of the bombing's impact, obtained from both unedited CNN feeds and Baghdad's WTN, than those shown in the U.S.)

This reporter viewed the unedited Baghdad feeds the following day; they showed scenes of incredible carnage. Nearly all the bodies were charred into blackness; in some cases the heat had been so great that entire limbs were burned off. Among the corpses were those of at least six babies and ten children, most of them so severely burned that their gender could not be determined. Rescue workers collapsed in grief, dropping corpses; some rescuers vomited from the stench of the still-smouldering bodies.

JTV news director Mohammed Amin was so overwhelmed by the video images that he ordered the worst of the footage withheld from broadcast.

"We felt it deeply," he says. "We were — we are now — all overwhelmed. But, of course, we must remain objective. And we don't want to show the ugliest images of the war." Rousan adds that her colleagues felt that broadcasting the grisliest images would fly in the face of Islamic teachings, which dictate that "the humanity of the individual, the dignity, cannot be defiled."

Shortly before she went on the air at 10:00 P.M., Rousan, who anchors the English-language news broadcast, viewed the unedited videotapes from Baghdad. "I'm not an emotional person," she says, "but I was there crying like a baby. I saw a young child's body, completely charred, clothes and hair all burned off, and there was still smoke

coming off him. I've never seen anything like that in my life! I went into the makeup room and cried uncontrollably."

News director Amin recalls cursing the American bombers in a rage that night while his staff wept. "We all felt it," he says, "as if it were Jordanians under those bombs, our people. Because we are one people, we are all Arabs, we could see those children as our children, and it hurt our hearts like I cannot tell you."

On the air, Rousan visibly struggled to keep her emotions under control. She could not keep from sounding sarcastic, however, when she introduced a clip of U.S. Brigadier General Richard Neal's explanation of why U.S.-led forces bombed the site. "I didn't intend to do that, of course," Rousan says. "It was very unprofessional. I just couldn't help it, though." Another of Rousan's colleagues, while delivering a news update earlier in the evening, had cracked on the air, tears welling in her eyes and her voice breaking.

Even though Jordanians did not see the worst of the images from Baghdad that night, the effect on the population was profound. An elderly sheik went berserk minutes after the broadcast. Setting out in search of a target for his rage, he stabbed a German student whom he mistook for an American. For two days, hundreds of enraged Jordanians surrounded the Egyptian and American embassies and the United Nations building in Amman, shouting pro-Saddam slogans, throwing stones, and attacking Western journalists.

"You know what would cool us off?" shouted Safer Hadi, a twenty-four-year-old banker, as he demonstrated in front of the U.S. embassy. "American babies killed like the Iraqis we saw on TV tonight. We would have pleasure in that. I have many American friends, but this is something beyond friendship. Americans must accept responsibility. You," he said, punching his finger sharply into my chest, "must accept responsibility."

If JTV had aired, unedited, all the video it received, the reaction of Jordanians and Palestinians would no doubt have been far more violent. One can only wonder how U.S. viewers would have reacted if they had seen the unedited video, or at least more than the sanitized few moments that were aired.

"All my life I will remember these things in vivid detail," Rousan says. "I was educated in the States — I lived there seven years when my father was ambassador, in the sixties — and I was expecting the American people to say, 'We made a mistake, we're so sorry.' But they didn't. And it's terribly hard for me. I feel so American. It's half of who I am. But now I feel it's morally wrong to be pro-American, and it's like having to hate half of myself."

Rousan, who is forty years old, has a clear "American" memory of where she was the day John F. Kennedy was assassinated. Now, she says, she will always carry an equally vivid "Iraqi" memory of her whereabouts the day bombs fell on a Baghdad air-raid shelter. ♦

Laurie Garrett, medical writer for Newsday, was part of the paper's Persian Gulf war reporting team.



1991

Celebrating
EXCELLENCE
IN
JOURNALISM

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM
honors this year's winners of
THE ALFRED I. DUPONT-COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY
AWARDS IN BROADCAST JOURNALISM,
THE PULITZER PRIZES
and the finalists of
THE NATIONAL MAGAZINE AWARDS

Celebrating Excellence in Broadcast Journalism

GOLD BATON

Hedrick Smith, Martin Smith Productions and WGBH, Boston, Massachusetts
for "Inside Gorbachev's USSR with Hedrick Smith"

NETWORK TELEVISION

ABC News
for "Peter Jennings Reporting: From the Killing Fields"
CBS News
for segments on Eastern Europe on the "CBS Evening News with Dan Rather"
NBC News
for "Tragedy at Pine Ridge" on the "NBC Nightly News with Tom Brokaw"

MAJOR MARKET TELEVISION

KQED, San Francisco, California
for "Express: Shield for Abuse"
Roberta Baskin and WJLA-TV, Washington, D.C.
for "NFL Drug Testing: Illegal Procedure"

MEDIUM MARKET TELEVISION

KING-TV, Seattle, Washington
for "Critical Choices: America's Health Care Crisis"
Dick Feagler and WKYC-TV, Cleveland, Ohio
for nightly commentaries

SMALL MARKET TELEVISION

WCBD-TV, Charleston, South Carolina
for coverage of Hurricane Hugo

INDEPENDENT TELEVISION PRODUCTIONS

Christine Choy, Renee Tajima, WTVS, Detroit, Michigan, and "P.O.V."
for "Who Killed Vincent Chin?"

Frederick Wiseman
for "Near Death"
Blackside, Inc.
for "Eyes on the Prize II: America at the Racial Crossroads"

RADIO

Helen Borten and National Public Radio
for "Horizons: And Justice for All"
KCBS-AM, San Francisco, California
for coverage of the earthquake

ALFRED I. duPONT-COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY AWARDS IN BROADCAST JOURNALISM

A program of the Alfred I. duPont Awards Foundation
administered by the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism

BORGMAN WINS PULITZER



KING FEATURES

is proud to have syndicated
the outstanding work of
Jim Borgman since 1980.
Congratulations Jim, and to
your hometown paper,
The Cincinnati Enquirer!

King Features 1-800-526-KING

Celebrating Excellence in Journalism and the Arts

JOURNALISM

PUBLIC SERVICE

- The Des Moines Register for reporting by Jane Schorer that, with the victim's consent, named a woman who had been raped — which prompted widespread reconsideration of the traditional media practice of concealing the identity of rape victims.
- Also nominated as finalists: the Los Angeles Times for a series by David Freed; and the Star Tribune, Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minn.

SPOT NEWS REPORTING

- The Miami Herald staff for stories profiling a local cult leader, his followers, and their links to several area murders.
- Also nominated as finalists: the staff of The Detroit News; and the staff of New York Newsday.

INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING

- Joseph T. Hallinan and Susan M. Headden of The Indianapolis Star for their shocking series on medical malpractice in the state.
- Also nominated as finalists: Candy J. Cooper of the San Francisco Examiner; and Ray Herndon of the Dallas Times Herald.

EXPLANATORY JOURNALISM

- Susan C. Faludi of The Wall Street Journal for a report on the leveraged buy-out of Safeway Stores, Inc., that revealed the human costs of high finance.
- Also nominated as finalists: Charles A. Hite of the Roanoke Times & World-News; and Ronald Kotulak and Peter Gorner of the Chicago Tribune.

BEAT REPORTING

- Natalie Angier of The New York Times for her compelling and illuminating reports on a variety of scientific topics.
- Also nominated as finalists: Scott Harper of The Capital, Annapolis, Md.; and David Shaw of the Los Angeles Times.

NATIONAL REPORTING

- Marjie Lundstrom and Rochelle Sharpe of Gannett News Service for reporting that disclosed that hundreds of child abuse-related deaths go undetected each year as a result of errors by medical examiners.
- Also nominated as finalists: Bruce D. Butterfield of The Boston Globe; and Charles Green of Knight-Ridder, Inc.

INTERNATIONAL REPORTING (Two Prizes)

- Carlyle Murphy of The Washington Post for her dispatches from occupied Kuwait, some of which she filed while in hiding from Iraqi authorities.
- Serge Schmemann of The New York Times for his coverage of the reunification of Germany.
- Also nominated as a finalist: the staff of The Wall Street Journal.

FEATURE WRITING

- Sheryl James of the St. Petersburg (Fla.) Times for a compelling series about a mother who abandoned her newborn child and how it affected her life and those of others.
- Also nominated as finalists: Tad Bartimus of The Associated Press; and Wil Haygood of The Boston Globe.

CONTINUED

THE PULITZER PRIZES

Natalie Angier and Serge Schmemann win 1991 Pulitzer Prizes for The New York Times.

For writing about subjects on two very different planes — molecular biology/animal behavior and the historic reunification of the German people — two New York Times reporters have won Pulitzer Prizes for 1991.



Natalie Angier, a science reporter, won the Pulitzer for her coverage of molecular biology and animal behavior; a distinguished example of beat reporting.

At The Times a mere 10 months, Ms. Angier has already recruited a wide and devoted audience of everyday readers and scientists alike. If her articles have a single purpose beyond telling the news, it is to give pleasure. Her story on infidelity in the animal kingdom was the talk of New York; another article on the biology of scorpions made this somewhat unattractive subject seem virtually inviting.

Ms. Angier tackles abstruse technical advances at the forefront of molecular biology with grace and assurance. One tour de force of technical writing explained an important conjecture about the evolution of the functional units of genes known as exons. Never mind that few science reporters would even take on such a complex issue; so accessible and precise was Ms. Angier's article that even the author of the theory, Walter Gilbert, faxed his congratulations.

Ms. Angier has written about science for Discover and Time; her book "Natural Obsessions: The Search for the Oncogene" won the Lewis Thomas Award for excellence in writing about the life sciences.



Serge Schmemann, Bonn bureau chief, won the Pulitzer for his coverage of the reunification of Germany; a distinguished example of reporting on international affairs.

In meeting perhaps *the* journalistic challenge of a momentous year, Mr. Schmemann's coverage was an artful symphony, binding together many themes — small human stories, national legends, political dreams, haunting memories and the residue of old enmities.

Among the first to recognize that very little stood in the way of unification, Mr. Schmemann similarly was among the first to sense that in addition to euphoria and rejoicing, there were growing strains of apprehension. As the pace of reunification quickened with summer, Mr. Schmemann added successive layers to his reporting, emphasizing first the mechanics and economics of the process; then the political strategies.

From October 3, the day of German unity, to December 2, the day of all-German elections, Mr. Schmemann provided a steady stream of articles that collectively reflected not just what happened, but what was being thought, what was being wished and what was being feared in places high and low.

The New York Times

Prize-winning journalism is part of the tradition.

63 Pulitzer awards. More than any other newspaper.

Celebrating Excellence in Journalism and the Arts

JOURNALISM continued

COMMENTARY

- Jim Hoagland of *The Washington Post* for searching and prescient columns on events leading up to the Gulf War and on the political problems of Mikhail Gorbachev.
- Nominated as finalists: Rheta Grimsley Johnson of *The Commercial Appeal*, Memphis, Tenn.; Philip Terzian of *The Journal-Bulletin*, Providence, R.I.; and William F. Woo of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*.

CRITICISM

- David Shaw of the *Los Angeles Times* for his critiques of the way in which the media, including his own paper, reported the McMartin Pre-School child molestation case.
- Nominated as finalists: Christopher Knight of the *Los Angeles Times*; Joyce Millman of the *San Francisco Examiner*; and Leslie Savan of *The Village Voice*.

EDITORIAL WRITING

- Ron Casey, Harold Jackson and Joey Kennedy of *The Birmingham (Ala.) News* for their editorial campaign analyzing inequities in Alabama's tax system, and proposing needed reforms.
- Also nominated as finalists: Seth Lipsky of the *Forward* (a New York City weekly); and Martin F. Nolan of *The Boston Globe*.

EDITORIAL CARTOONING

- Jim Borgman of *The Cincinnati Enquirer*.

- Also nominated as finalists: Ralph Dunagin of *The Orlando (Fla.) Sentinel*; and Signe Wilkinson of the *Philadelphia Daily News*.

SPOT NEWS PHOTOGRAPHY

- Greg Marinovich of The Associated Press for a series of photographs of supporters of South Africa's African National Congress brutally murdering a man they believed to be a Zulu spy.

- Also nominated as finalists: the photo staff of the *Detroit Free Press*; and the photo staff of *Newsday*.

FEATURE PHOTOGRAPHY

- William Snyder of *The Dallas Morning News* for his photographs of ill and orphaned children living in subhuman conditions in Romania.
- Also nominated as finalists: Ron Cortes of *The Philadelphia Inquirer*; and Jay Mather of *The Sacramento Bee*.

LETTERS

FICTION

- "Rabbit at Rest" by John Updike (Alfred A. Knopf).

DRAMA

- "Lost in Yonkers" by Neil Simon.

HISTORY

- "A Midwife's Tale: The Life of Martha Ballard Based on Her Diary, 1785-1812" by Laurel Thatcher Ulrich (Alfred A. Knopf).

BIOGRAPHY

- "Jackson Pollock: An American Saga" by Steven Naifeh and Gregory White Smith (Clarkson N. Potter).

POETRY

- "Near Changes" by Mona Van Duyn (Alfred A. Knopf).

GENERAL NONFICTION

- "The Ants" by Bert Hölldobler and Edward O. Wilson (Belknap/Harvard University Press).

MUSIC

- "Symphony" by Shulamit Ran, premiered on October 19, 1990, in Philadelphia by the Philadelphia Orchestra.

THE PULITZER PRIZES

Awarded by Columbia University
on the recommendation of The Pulitzer Prize Board

JIM HOAGLAND

Winner of the 1991
Pulitzer Prize
For Commentary



The Pulitzer Board cited The Washington Post columnist and senior foreign correspondent for his "searching and prescient" columns on the threat posed by Iraq's president Saddam Hussein and Mikhail Gorbachev's problems with perestroika. This is Hoagland's second Pulitzer; he won his first in 1971 for a series on apartheid in South Africa.

CARYLE MURPHY

Winner of the 1991
Pulitzer Prize
For International Reporting



For 26 days last August, The Washington Post's Cairo bureau chief was the only American newspaper reporter in occupied Kuwait. Her courageous and resourceful reporting from inside the eye of the storm has also won the George Polk Award and the Edward Weintal Prize for Diplomatic Reporting.

*The Washington Post congratulates two exceptional journalists
on winning the profession's ultimate pat on the back.*

The Washington Post

Celebrating Excellence in Magazines

1991 National Magazine Awards finalists

GENERAL EXCELLENCE

(under 100,000 circ.)

The Angolite
The New Republic
The Sciences
WigWag
ZOOMin'

(100,000 to 400,000 circ.)

American Heritage
Art & Antiques
Harvard Business Review
Interview
Outside

(400,000 to 1,000,000 circ.)

Condé Nast Traveler
Forbes
Gourmet
The New Yorker
Sassy

(over 1,000,000 circ.)

Consumer Reports
Glamour
Money
National Geographic
People Weekly
Time

PERSONAL SERVICE

Changing Times
Condé Nast Traveler
New York
Outside
Town & Country

SPECIAL INTERESTS

The Atlantic Monthly
Field & Stream
New York
Popular Mechanics
Vogue

REPORTING

The Atlantic Monthly
Esquire
Harper's Magazine
The Nation
The New Yorker

FEATURE WRITING

The Atlantic Monthly
Esquire
Life
7 Days
U.S. News & World Report
Vanity Fair

PUBLIC INTEREST

American Health
Family Circle
The New Yorker
Progressive Farmer
U.S. News & World Report

DESIGN

Condé Nast Traveler
Interview
Mirabella
Rolling Stone
Summit: The Mountain Journal
Yankee

PHOTOGRAPHY

Harper's Bazaar
L.A. Style
Life
National Geographic
Vanity Fair

FICTION

The Atlantic Monthly
Esquire
Harper's Magazine
The New Yorker
The New Yorker

ESSAYS & CRITICISM

Esquire
The Nation
Premiere
The Sciences
Time

SINGLE-TOPIC ISSUE

The American Lawyer
Entertainment Weekly
Money
The New Republic
Newsweek

NATIONAL MAGAZINE AWARDS

Sponsored by the American Society of Magazine Editors,
supported by the Magazine Publishers of America, and administered by
the Columbia Graduate School of Journalism

WHERE HAVE ALL THE PEOPLE GONE?

BY JAMES BOYLAN

A

Reflections on voter alienation and the challenge it poses to the press

Although it was forecast to be a veritable hurricane of voter anger and frustration, the 1990 midterm election neither breached sea walls nor blew down trees. In fact, it came and went much like its predecessors: it returned to Congress more than 95 percent of the incumbents who chose to run; it earned the participation of only a little more than one in three Americans of voting age, a proportion that has varied little since the post-Watergate election of 1974; and it revealed the further growth, to almost 120 million souls, of what has been called the "party of nonvoters," those of voting age who do not show up at a polling place on a national election day.

Political scientists continue to provide a standard set of explanations for the phenomenon of non-turnout: the declining ability of the major parties to stimulate political activity or create agendas; the failure of new campaign marketing techniques to mobilize support; the apparent voter weariness when the big business of officeholding demands attention to year-round campaigns; and, not least, the discouragement created by the legal and procedural obstacles still placed in the way of those who might otherwise vote. Blame is also apportioned to the nonvoters themselves, for ignorance, cynicism, and — the catchall term — apathy.

Less attention is given to the possibility that many members of the party of nonvoters are not irreversibly apathetic, cynical, ignorant, or self-indulgent. Many in fact may be making a political statement of their own — that they fail to see in current politics, as presented by the media, any connection between their vote and their political interests.

Historians have discerned an earlier party of nonvoters, persisting until the New Deal called it out of hiding. The new party-in-waiting, like its predecessor in the 1920s, is a reverse image of the present American electorate. American voters are drawn disproportionately from the better educated, better off, and elderly. In contrast with electoral democracies elsewhere, the United States has failed to gain in equal proportions the participation of the less wealthy, the less educated,

the young, and, most recently and curiously, the male.

At this point, neither of the major parties appears to have a clue as to what the current party of nonvoters is waiting for; sometimes they do not appear eager to find out. Indeed, the mini-electorate has its apologists, who ask what is wrong with having those who are most interested and best informed do the voting.

One thing is certain: the causes of nonvoting are deeply embedded in our political culture and their alleviation will depend on the course of political change. This is not to imply that the problem is too vast and intractable to be addressed, but simply that it is too big for gimmicks. Specific measures can help. After all, federal legislation in the 1960s helped create the South's first black electorate since Reconstruction. Most of all, it appears, we need to rediscover what, if anything, politics is about or might be about.

Which brings us to journalism. Journalism fits into the problem somewhere, maybe not as obviously as many journalists (and their critics) would think. It is a given that mass communication provides most of the contact people have

CAMPAIN '92

with candidates for major offices. And journalism supplies a good part of that contact but, what with the growth of candidate advertising on television, by no means all. Yet there is far from universal agreement that reading and viewing political news has an important relationship to voting. A recent book on nonvoters — *Why Americans Don't Vote*, by Frances Fox Piven and Richard A. Cloward — does not even mention journalism.

Still, it is probably more than a statistical curiosity that the three-decade decline in voting has coincided, almost to the year, with a similar proportionate lag in newspaper reading. Like voting, newspaper reading has become a more elite practice; in particular, the great cities are peopled with increasing numbers of nonvoters and nonreaders. This is far

James Boylan is the founding editor of CJR.

from saying that there is a simple causal relationship — that people stopped voting because they stopped reading or vice versa. Nor is there necessarily support for the implication that the newer dominant medium, television, has smothered electoral politics.

Nonetheless, the two declines may share a common source — a lessening willingness by many Americans to consider themselves engaged in what, as recently as the 1960s, constituted a sense of common enterprise, that is, a national public life. In the years since, there have been many signs of a sea change in the content and manner of national politics. A *New Yorker* writer recently watched a recording of the first Kennedy-Nixon debate of 1960; so startling was the decorum, the attention to issues, the seriousness of the content, that the writer felt "as if this presidential debate were happening in some other culture."

Perhaps it was. As late as 1960 national politics could still be understood in terms defined by the Franklin Roosevelt years — domestically, the magnitude of economic entitlements; abroad, the American obligation to police the world. This rather constricted agenda held together an electorate through the middle years of the century, but even before the end of the 1960s it had lost its force. There was too much else crowding the docket — civil rights, racial upheaval, Vietnam, the environment, and more — to which elections may have seemed too tardy and too indirect a response.

There is no longer even agreement as to what to argue about. Some scholars — the worrying kind — have turned recently to inquire into the nature of public life in America, scrutinizing in particular the question of whether the press has carried out its historical function of offering the raw material for public debate.

James W. Carey, Daniel C. Hallin, and other media scholars have noted the long association between the press and public life. Newspapers, they point out, came into existence as an important auxiliary to political debate almost with the emergence of legislative and electoral politics. Carey, in a 1987 article in *The Center Magazine*, points to James Madison's conception of the First Amendment — that the rights of free assembly, free speech, and the free press were created less specifically to guarantee individual expression than to evoke the public debate that creates a vigorous society.

"The public," Carey writes, "is a group that gathers to discuss the news." Such a notion sounds a bit wistful in a time when we think of politics on a national scale as a struggle of clashing interests, causes, and elites for ninety seconds on the evening news. But it has a point: that news ought not to be grist merely for consumption, but for discussion as well.

How well does news serve that purpose today? Stated in its most positive light, today's journalism operates largely to supply information: journalists gather the raw materials from

sources and process it into attractive news formats. Theoretically, the system opens the news to all subjects, to all the voices in a society, and the press should thus reflect the full range of society's concerns. But the reality is something else, for the simplest of reasons. Information, the raw material of news, usually turns out to be the peculiar property of those in power and their attendant experts and publicists.

The main link with the non powerful, non expert population is supposed to be the opinion poll. The problem with polls, as David L. Paletz and Robert M. Entman pointed out a decade ago in *Media Power Politics*, is that instead of finding out what is on people's minds, poll-takers usually — barring, say, a life-and-death question such as war or peace — find out what people think about questions of primary concern to the journalistic and political elites, issues on which public feelings may be "at best casual and tentative." Harry Boyte, director of the Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota, warns that poll results should not be mistaken for debate: "We have public opinion now, which is people's private reflexes. But we don't have public judgment. So everything is broken down into market segments. You have no public process."

Political journalism — that is, reporting on parties, candidates, campaigns — is a special case. Criticism of campaign reporting has chronically concentrated on the cliché that reporters focus on the "horse race" and disregard the "issues." But the difficulty may be not that politics is covered badly but that it is covered like other kinds of news and has the same constrictions. Political reporting, like other reporting, is defined largely by its sources. Political sources these days — candidates, consultants, free-floating quotesmiths — seem to be as addled about policy issues as the rest

of us and prefer to deal in ethnic-cultural cant, marketing predictions, and tactical speculation.

Drastic measures have been proposed to bring substance to the fore. A feasibility study by Alvin H. Perlmuter, Inc., for the John and Mary Markle Foundation proposed the creation of a company, The Voters' Channel, to stimulate new political programming, primarily through public radio and public television. The study envisioned four main types of effort: (1) to present voters' feelings and concerns; (2) to scrutinize the truthfulness of political communications; (3) to present a state-of-the-nation agenda; and (4) to provide national candidates and parties air time for direct communication. Programming is now being planned.

Robert Entman goes farther: in his *Democracy Without Citizens*, he proposes the restoration of the politically underwritten press of 160 years ago — the creation of "national news organizations run by the major parties and subsidized by the government," to foster the dissemination of "more analytical information, more diversity, more readily accessible ideas." Entman does not make clear how the palsied hand of present-day party bureaucracy can be sufficiently

Journalism fits into the problem somewhere, maybe not as obviously as many journalists (and their critics) would think

reinvigorated to take on such a task. Nor is there much encouragement to be found in one predecessor effort, the *Democratic Digest* of the 1950s, a pocket-size organ of no great depth designed to rally the faithful while the party was out of power.

Such proposals, while valuable in charting new political channels outside mainstream journalism, do not directly address the issue of journalism itself. In the rhetoric of journalism, "the public" is frequently invoked; functionally, however, news organizations rarely go beyond treating the public as consumer. Journalism produces news; the public eats it — or not, as it chooses.

Even when the function of journalism is considered to be education, the public role is still likely to be conceived as passive. Not uncommonly, news media try to find out what their readers and viewers have learned. Always the students are revealed to be failing; every one of the polls designed to reveal Americans' grasp of what are called, in schoolroom terms, current affairs finds that most are ignorant of such facts as the date of Earth Day or the name of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The implications of such polls are alarming, not because of what the subjects answer but because of what they show about the assumptions of the press: first, that people should look to the press for correct answers rather than raw material for argument; second and worse, that the press itself thinks of news as what it too often appears to be, just a jumble of unconnected facts.

In practice, American politics has come to be run by full-time insiders, and to a degree the press has aspired to be one of the insiders. It has taken on itself the task of scrutinizing and, on occasion, disqualifying candidates. It engages in as much speculation about campaign strategies as does any political consultant. And it has frequently made those consultants more central in the story of campaigns than the candidates themselves.

To change things around, to point the compass needle toward the public rather than the insider political networks, will be difficult, but it is a worthy challenge. Not because it implies vast upheavals in journalistic practice; it doesn't. But it proposes something more tortuous — a change in thinking.

Prescriptions from scholars of the public arena tend to be vague. What they have in common is their sense that journalism should be viewed as communication in which the recipient counts for something. Carey puts it: "The public will begin to reawaken when they are addressed as a conversational partner and are encouraged to join the talk rather than sit passively as spectators before a discussion conducted by journalists and experts." Indeed, the panel — a conversation conducted by journalists and experts — is one of the quintessential twentieth-century forms, and one of the most deadening; much of journalism is like a panel discussion in which those in the audience never get to ask a question.

The subject here, however, is not the public-access gim-

icks that the news media adopted so widely in the 1970s, and often abandoned later. The question is whether political news as such can be written for a public instead of for participants, and in public language rather than codes.

It may be time, in the 1992 campaign, to try to break up familiar patterns. There are several ideas in the air that may point in the right direction.

In an essay in *Critical Theory and Public Life* (1985), Daniel Hallin urges that reporters become more "sensitive to the underlying message their reporting conveys about politics and the citizen's relation to it." That message, he contends, is that money and expertise count for everything and the citizen for little or nothing. For example, in an article in the January/February issue of CJR ("Whose Campaign Is It, Anyway?"), Hallin notes the virtual disappearance of voters from television campaign coverage in 1984 and 1988 and the influx of insiders and consultants.

The columnist David Broder suggests that one way to break the hold of insiders is to go first to the voters. In a speech last November, he proposed that journalists should "start each election cycle as reporters in the precincts with the voters, themselves, talking to them face to face, finding out what is on their minds.... Let their concerns set our agenda and influence the questions we take to the candidates ... and help determine how we use the space in our newspaper and the air time on our broadcasts."

There may be another underlying message in political coverage — an implication that politics is either so esoteric or so dog-eat-dog that individual citizens should keep their distance. The political scientist Robert D. McClure has charged that journalism has taken on itself the task of becoming the chief interpreter of campaigns but has performed the task in a way that excludes "the reality of principle and moral purpose that forms the soul of a people's politics." Could there be a place in the political dialogue for those willing to discuss the moral-ethical dimension?

Another aspect of the problem may be journalistic specialists themselves, many of whom have long tenure and write with an air of magisterial entitlement. News organizations could vary their practice of consigning big-time politics to this aristocracy, not only by bringing in specialists from other fields but also, if such animals survive, generalists who write well, with a warning that they will be quarantined at the first sign of pontification.

It is, of course, not up to the media alone to reinvigorate American public life. But journalism remains the one non-official institution that is not, or at least should not be, itself a special interest. As such, it may in the long run be able to occupy a critical role in re-establishing a sense of common interests and common welfare. It can begin by seeking to emphasize its role of widening and deepening public discussion, of providing a record of its times, of doing no further harm to political life, if indeed it has done such harm. ♦

DISPATCHES FROM A

EL SALVADOR PUSHING THE LIMITS, PAYING THE PRICE

BY CHRIS NORTON

On April 22, 1990, *60 Minutes* aired a program charging that the U.S. embassy in El Salvador had bungled its role in the investigation of the November 1989 murder of six Jesuit priests, allegedly by Salvadoran soldiers, and that top officers suspected of ordering the murders had never been seriously investigated.

Just a week later the small San Salvador daily *Diario Latino* published a translated transcript of the *60 Minutes* show, breaking the taboo against criticizing the powerful Salvadoran military.

Then, over six weeks in May, the paper published in its entirety the U.S. Congress's Moakley Commission report on the killings, which also raised questions of a coverup by the Salvadoran military. "We had to publish it," says Francisco Valencia, the newspaper's young director. "The other local papers wouldn't report the charges against the army completely."

In June, *Diario Latino* ran an even harder-hitting document — a report by the congressional Arms Control and Foreign Policy Caucus charging that the Salvadoran army's top commanders had tolerated significant human rights abuses. That series ran for a month.

The paper's critical coverage is not always aimed at the right. Later that summer, *Diario Latino* ran a lengthy Americas Watch report that was highly critical of the leftist rebels in El Salvador, in particular of their denial of due process to people whom they accuse of

crimes and sometimes execute.

In February of this year, *Diario Latino* carried the Moakley Commission's update on the investigation into the killing of the Jesuits. Just a week later, Valencia was surveying the charred ruins of his newspaper.

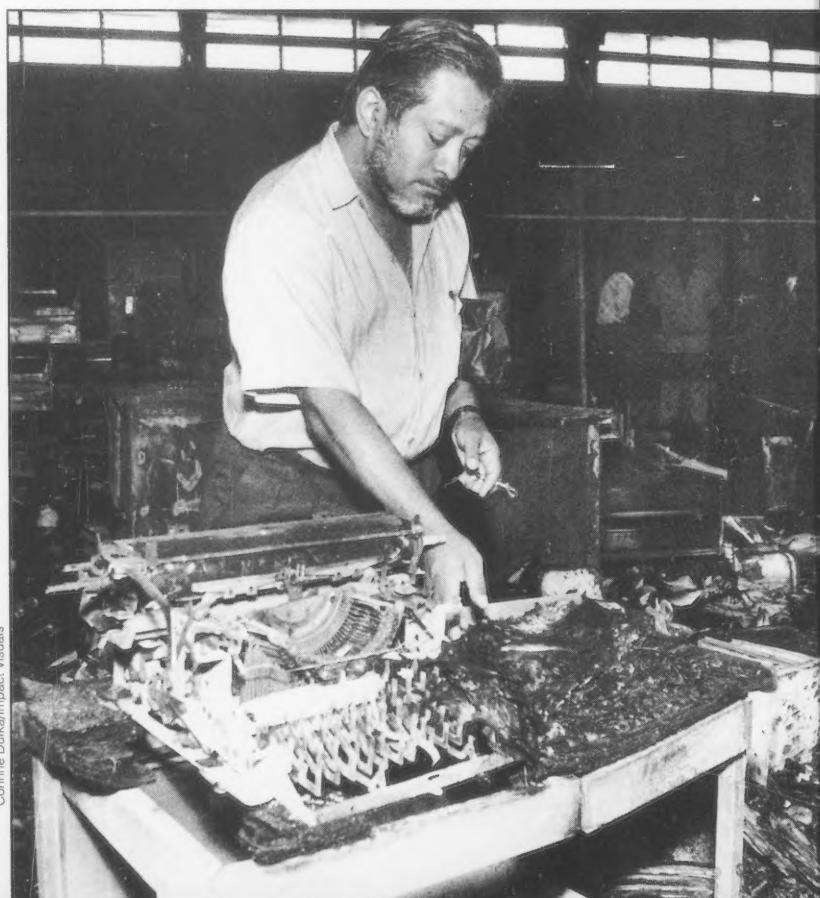
Arsonists had broken into the paper's office in the early morning hours of Saturday, February 9. By the time the fire was put out the newspaper's roof had

been damaged and much of its equipment, including two new IBM computers the typesetters were just learning to use, destroyed. The only good news was that the printing press, a durable 1964 Goss, was salvageable.

Who does Valencia think burned the paper? "The armed forces. All groups that do this sort of thing report to them."

When *Diario Latino*'s employees took over management of the paper two years ago, it became the only opposition voice in El Salvador. (Death squads allegedly linked to the military had earlier silenced the country's only two independent papers, in 1980 and 1981, by bombing the press of one and hacking to death the editor and chief photographer of the other.) The country's two morning

ARSON'S AFTERMATH: A *Diario Latino* editor checks out the damage.



Corinne Dufka/Impact Visuals

Chris Norton is a free-lance writer who has covered El Salvador for seven years for a number of publications, including *Newsday*, *The Christian Science Monitor*, and the *San Francisco Examiner*.

FORGOTTEN FRONT

papers, for example, never print rebel statements and *Diario Latino*'s afternoon competitor does so only rarely; *Diario Latino*, on the other hand, not only prints these communiques but sometimes runs interviews with guerrilla commandantes, as well. It also covers opposition political parties, unions, and church groups — the so-called "popular movement" — all ignored by Salvador's conservative print media. (Paid ads by these groups, often denouncing army repression, help the paper pay its bills.)

Despite the destruction of its facilities, *Diario Latino* is not dead. Three days after the fire, a four-page edition, printed on a small press at the National University, appeared on the streets; a week later, the paper had expanded to eight pages. Meanwhile, teams of engineering students from the university were rewiring the damaged press, and the first \$10,000 installment of \$25,000 in aid from a Belgian humanitarian organization was earmarked for a new roof.

The newspaper has other problems to overcome, however. A wheeler-dealer majority stockholder, Julio Adolfo Rey Prendes, ran up a \$700,000 debt to state-run banks when he was an official in José Napoleon Duarte's Christian Democratic government. As if the threat of violence from the military were not enough, that debt adds to the uncertainty about *Diario Latino*'s survival. ♦



THE TEAM: The Unidad de investigación consists of (seated) Mónica Vecco and (standing, left to right) Francisco Mattos, Francisco Reyes, Virgilio Grajeda, team secretary Fani Gurrionero, and Angel Paéz. Monica Newton is not shown.

de investigación, is to the powerful in Peru.

La República got its start as a sensationalist crime tabloid in 1981. Since then, it has turned into a serious paper, and its combative, muckraking style has won it second place in Peru (circulation 105,000), not far behind the leading paper, the staid *El Comercio*.

The *Unidad de investigación* is two women and four men, who might best be described as journalistic commandos, willing to venture into Peru's most remote and strife-torn areas to get the story.

Since its formation in February 1990, the team has published in-depth pieces on such subjects as the Maoist Shining Path guerrillas' brutal campaign to rid the countryside of civil authorities, the spread of killer fevers among Peru's jungle tribes, and a four-part series on "The Other Huallaga," which documented the spread of coca cultivation beyond the Upper Huallaga valley, the focus of U.S. anti-drug efforts. "Added to the 60,000

hectares already being cultivated in the Upper Huallaga," wrote Francisco Reyes, the investigative unit's young specialist on drugs and political violence, "these 50,000 new hectares show clearly the failure of the purely repressive strategy applied by successive American governments."

When Reyes and photographer Virgilio Grajeda joined the *Unidad de investigación*, Castropampa was first on their wish list of places to go. The army base overlooks the province of Huanta, cradle of the Shining Path. Their first story on Castropampa was based on interviews with local peasants who said the army was forcing them to join paramilitary units which, in turn, took part in massacres and "disappearances" of people the army said supported the guerrillas.

The story came out last July on the

Robin Kirk is an associate editor of Pacific News Service and a correspondent for the San Francisco Chronicle. She lives in Lima.

PERU COMMANDO-STYLE JOURNALISM

BY ROBIN KIRK

It was at the desolate, wind-swept army base called Castropampa that I saw first-hand what a thorn in the side *La República*'s investigative unit, *Unidad*



ENDANGERED:
La República's
Francisco Reyes
interviews the
mayor of Chuschi,
Francisco Vilca,
who was later
assassinated by
members of the
Maoist rebel group
Shining Path.

Virgilio Grajeda/La República

morning that I was interviewing base commander Lieutenant Colonel Alfonso Hurtado, known locally as the "Big Banana." He was not pleased: other newspapers, he said, are content to publish military press releases, and do not go nosing into what is none of their business. "I am the maximum authority in the province of Huanta," he shouted at me, "and I can guarantee you that those [La República] reporters will never set foot here again."

Threats from the military are taken seriously in Peru. La República correspondent Jaime Ayal, for example, walked into a Huanta navy base in 1984 and has yet to come out.

But despite Hurtado's displeasure, Reyes and Grajeda came back to report a second article, this one focused on "Centurión," a Castropampa sergeant — and Hurtado aide — who villagers claimed had directed most of the ninety "disappearances" documented in Huanta in the first six months of 1990. Photographer Grajeda, who speaks fluent Quechua, had, with the help of Quechua-speaking peasant women, even managed to identify and photograph Centurión during a Sunday parade in Huanta's central square.

Such scrutiny is galling to the nation's security forces, which are rarely criticized by anyone in Peruvian society. Although Peru's press is free, there is a strong feeling among its journalists that self-censorship and an open alliance with the security forces play an increasingly important role in shaping what is consid-

ered news. For instance, the newsweekly *Caretas*, which has a long tradition of publishing hard-hitting pieces, recently released a statement on "journalistic principles in covering subversion," which declares that journalists should be "natural and conscious allies of the armed forces and police."

Yet according to Alejandro Miró Quesada, vice-president of the Freedom of the Press committee of the Inter-American Press Association, of the twenty-six journalists killed and "disappeared" in Peru since 1983, seventeen were the victims either of the security forces or of legal and extralegal paramilitary units allied with the government. (Under a

state of emergency first declared in 1982 and later expanded several times, the security forces control more than half of Peru's territory.)

Unidad de investigación's structure — two-person teams that travel to troubled areas but are back in Lima by the time the story breaks — is designed to reduce the risk of reporting in Peru, says Angel Paéz, who runs the unit. "Local correspondents," he adds, "are especially subject to pressure and open threats from all sides — not to report critical stories or stories that contradict or call into question the official story." Paez is proud of the results: "Before the *Unidad* was formed, most of what we published didn't go beyond the simple recitation of figures — how many dead and this many buckets of blood."

Members of the unit grumble about management's delays in printing pieces critical of the left-wing politicos who dominate *La República's* board of directors. They also complain about low salaries — \$200 per month — and the minuscule expense accounts that more than once have left photographers without film and team members stranded in the provinces without bus fare home.

What keeps the investigative unit plugging away is a sense that their work makes a difference in Peru. "People not only read our work, but cut it out and save it," says Reyes. "For me that's a compliment and a sign we're doing our job." ♦

COLOMBIA

THE DRUG DEALERS' NEW TACTIC

BY DAVID LLOYD MARCUS

Francisco Santos, the whirling dervish editor of Colombia's largest newspaper, *El Tiempo*, left work in his bulletproof jeep last September 19 to go to a hypnotist who he hoped would help him overcome his addiction to cigarettes.

On a suburban Bogotá street a few miles away, several men with secret-

David Lloyd Marcus is South America bureau chief of The Dallas Morning News.

police credentials stopped the jeep, shot and killed the chauffeur, then whisked Santos away in a stolen car. That was the last time he was seen in public.

A few days earlier, six journalists had packed clothing for a three-day trip to the countryside to interview a guerrilla leader. The group included a team from the TV news program *Cripton*; Diana Turbay, publisher of the magazine *Hoy por Hoy* and the daughter of former

President Julio Turbay; and German stringer Hero Buss, who had decided to join the group at the last minute. There was no interview; the journalists were kidnapped.

Then, on the evening of November 7, Maruja Pachon, director of the state-owned film commission and a former television reporter, and her sister-in-law Beatriz Villamizar, also an employee of the commission, were forced from their car in Bogotá. Their driver was killed.

No one took responsibility for these nine abductions until late fall, when, with a flurry of communiques, cocaine traffickers known as "the Extraditables" announced that they were holding the hostages to protest violations of the traffickers' "human rights."

Throughout the 1980s Colombia's reporters and editors were threatened, their phones tapped, their relatives tailed, their offices bombed. Twenty-three of them were killed in the five years ending in 1990, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists. Yet, remarkably, the media — especially the print media — remained aggressive. Much of what the world learned about the cocaine cartels came from hard-hitting reports that ran

first in *El Espectador* and *El Tiempo*, Bogotá's leading dailies, and *Semana* magazine.

Some reporters and editors fear that, in the wake of the kidnappings, Colombia's press is finally backing off. Special reports on the drug industry are increasingly rare and editorials increasingly feeble.

Colombian editors insist they are as dogged as ever, but in the same breath they admit to constant second-guessing about the dangerous fallout from sensitive scoops.

At *El Tiempo*, owned by the Santos family, Francisco's kidnapping "is like a ghost that you cannot avoid," says Juan Manuel Santos, the paper's managing editor and Francisco's cousin. "We haven't dropped any investigation, but we think twice — an investigation has to be much more important now."

Even before the kidnappings, *El Tiempo* couldn't find anyone to issue life insurance to its owners and employees. The newspaper has about forty bodyguards on its payroll, at a cost of "a fortune," one editor says, and it owns six armored cars, each worth more than \$50,000. Guards frisk visitors and soldiers armed with automatic weapons patrol *El Tiempo*'s offices.

Friends of the kidnapped journalists have been kept on edge for months. Juan Vita, news editor of *Hoy por Hoy*, was released in late November. Two members of the *Cripton* news team were released in December, as was Hero Buss. Newsrooms resonated with rumors that the rest would be freed by Christmas. The abductors released a tape of Santos reading front-page headlines of *El Tiempo* to prove he was alive. Christmas came and went, however, and the Extraditables sent out mixed signals.

In January, the kidnappers released a *Cripton* camera operator, but at the same time *Hoy por Hoy*'s Diana Turbay was killed as special police stormed the neighborhood. Accounts of how she died differ; the police say her captors shot her in the back. The Extraditables subsequently sent out communiques vowing renewed violence. Beatriz Villamizar was released in early February. As of early April, however, Francisco Santos and Maruja Pachon were still missing; the Extraditables had threatened to kill them because, they said, traffickers' rela-



Courtesy: *El Tiempo*

HOSTAGE: "The Extraditables" have threatened to kill Francisco Santos, editor of Colombia's largest newspaper, whom they've held for eight months.

tives were being tortured by police.

Colombian journalists are embittered these days, sensing that they, and they alone, have been left to take a stand against drugs and corruption, while the country's congress, courts, churches, and other institutions have kept silent. The public, exhausted by bombings and political assassinations, now overwhelmingly favors light sentences or even amnesty for cocaine kingpins. And the international media, which couldn't get enough of Colombia's tragedy a year and a half ago, have moved on to other trouble zones.

Amid such change, journalists are rethinking their role. "You see there's no ending to this story. You want to stay alive. You don't want to get killed in a war that doesn't end," says María Jimena Duzan, formerly a columnist and foreign editor for *El Espectador*. Her friend and editor, Guillermo Cano, was assassinated by *narcos* in 1986, and her sister, a television reporter, was killed last year. Last spring, Duzan, who has been threatened more times than she can remember, went into exile in the United States.

"Freedom of expression is certainly sacrificed" in the current atmosphere of fear, says Juan Manuel Santos. "We try to think it's not, we try to think that it's still what it was before, but that's not true." ♦



SHOT IN THE BACK: Kidnapped in September, Hoy por Hoy magazine publisher Diana Turbay died in January as police stormed the neighborhood where she was held.

"Mandatory Reading"



Why did *The Economist* say *The New Republic* was "mandatory reading"? Because the weekly debate that goes into forming *The New Republic* mirrors the cut and thrust of the national debate on every important issue. And it's an *informed* debate based on direct access to the White House, Congress, political and business leaders and the media. That's why our views are eagerly sought out. And that's why reading

The New Republic is the only way to keep abreast of the twists and turns that make politics, its people and its power, so fascinating.

Subscribe now and you'll get the *whole* story.

The New Republic also publishes some of the most penetrating reviews of movies, the theater and the arts you'll read anywhere. And book reviews? They're the most ... well, why don't you find out for yourself? Return the coupon now or call 1-800-247-6350.

Name (please print)

Street

City, State, Zip

Yes! Send me 48 issues for just \$44.95

Payment enclosed

Bill Me

Please charge my :

Visa

MC

AmEx

Account #

Expiration Date

Signature

Allow 3-5 weeks for delivery of your first issue. Offer good to U.S. addresses.

Return this coupon with payment to: ***The New Republic***

P.O.Box 52333

Boulder, CO

80321-2333

THE NEW REPUBLIC

PICKING THE PULITZERS

It can be stated as a general rule that if you send in your entry stapled upside down in the binder, you lessen your chance of winning a Pulitzer Prize. Beyond that mishap from the Manhattan, Kansas, *Mercury*, it's less clear what ensures success here in the World Room at Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism, where sixty-five jurors plow through 1,610 entries to choose forty-two nominees for journalism's highest award.

But finding the best work is only half the task of the Pulitzer jurors. Our other, unstated, function is to keep the prize from being tarnished by an embarrassing flap when the fourteen Pulitzer Prize-winning reporters, writers, columnists, cartoonists, and photographers are announced.

With both those goals in mind, here are one juror's observations on what goes on at the high altar of American journalism.

We gather at 9:00 A.M. Monday, March 4, under the stained-glass portrait of the Statue of Liberty transplanted from Joseph Pulitzer's *World*. We are fifty-three men and twelve women, fifty-two whites and thirteen minorities. Most are senior editors, a few are reporters. Among us are sixteen Pulitzer winners. Those of us who have served as jurors before can see at a glance that, with the absence of Dave Barry, the cocktail party conversation this year will be less enjoyable than last, but at least we have Molly Ivins.

The tables are stacked high with binders. The total is down 9 percent from last year's record number, either because journalism declined or because budget-cutting papers decided to save a little on the \$20 entry fees. The shortest odds are in International Reporting, with only fifty-nine entrants, and the longest again this year are in Commentary, with 216 competitors.

For some entries this won't be the first read. *New York Post* editor Jerry Nachman doesn't send me many letters, but on February 15, just after the

Bill Dedman received the 1989 Pulitzer Prize in Investigative Reporting for articles in The Atlanta Journal-Constitution on racial discrimination by lenders. A former staff writer for The Washington Post, he is writing a book on computer-assisted journalism.

names of the jurors were released, he mailed me a reprint of "Children of the Damned," a "disturbing" look at children of crack-addicted mothers, articles that happen to be entered in two categories.

Disturbing is a good word for Nachman's lobbying; another might be "tacky." But jurors presume that other lobbying or horsetrading, less blatant but more effective, must happen at a higher level, where their recommendations are sometimes overruled by the nineteen luminaries on the Pulitzer Prize board.

Before beginning our reading we hear brief instructions from Pulitzer administrator Robert C. Christopher: Choose three nominees ("no more and no fewer"). List them in alphabetical order, with a brief statement in support of each. Our nominations are purely advisory and can be discarded by the board ("although the board does not do so lightly"). "All other things being equal, the Pulitzer board always urges jurors to try to reward individual effort." And the most strongly stated rule, prompted by controversies of the past: "It is not part of a jury's function to indicate any order of preference among its three nominations."

Christopher adds that the staff tries not to place jurors on panels in which their paper is entered, but it happens often because many papers enter every category. So we are told to leave the room when entries from our paper are discussed; we may do so for entries from competing papers at our discretion.

Those instructions don't cover every possibility, as we quickly find when we begin our deliberations at table number 5, Beat Reporting.

▼ Issue No. 1 ▼ THE SNAKEPIT

Potential conflicts are everywhere: employers judging previous employees, employees judging previous (and prospective) employers, friends judging friends, enemies judging enemies. And those are just the conflicts we can see.

At my table, *St. Petersburg Times* editor Andrew Barnes recuses himself from reading the stories of a *New Haven Register* reporter who had been covering Yale University's takeover fight with Barnes's newspaper. *Chicago Sun-Times* editor Dennis A. Britton decides he shouldn't read the work of the

BY BILL DEDMAN

Potential conflicts are everywhere: friends judging friends, enemies judging enemies. And those are just the conflicts we can see.

Judging entries is like trolling at a singles bar: our task is not to judge the merits of every entry but simply to determine if there are others we like better

media critic who used to work for him at the *Los Angeles Times*, nor does he read the *Chicago Tribune's* technology writer. I decide (with great regret) to avoid the sixty-pound entry (with Supplement A and Supplement B) from Scripps Howard's Andrew Schneider, a personal friend with whom I have dinner plans tonight.

Here's an entry from the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, fine stories by Martha Shirk on the failure of coroners to detect child abuse. The accompanying letter of praise is signed by William F. Woo, editor of the *Post-Dispatch*, who is seated at the next table judging Editorial Writing and whose own columns are being judged upstairs in the Commentary category. That alone is not unusual; nearly everybody here has horses in the race. Our eyebrows did rise, however, when we read the author's bio at the back of the entry: "Martha Shirk lives in St. Louis with her husband, William F. Woo, editor of the *Post-Dispatch*." As one juror says, "You'd think the managing editor could have signed that letter."

Judging Pulitzer entries is like trolling at a singles bar: our task is not to judge the merits of every entry, but simply to determine if there are others we like better.

We begin by scanning for benchmarks. A juror who likes a candidate points it out to others, who read it next. Each juror marks yes or no on each entry: a single yes is enough to keep it on the table through the first cut. Entries that receive five no's are pitched on the floor, where they pile up like carcasses in a slaughterhouse.

Letters of recommendation, when not from the entrants themselves, do sometimes illuminate the work, pointing out obstacles overcome or reforms initiated. Unfortunately, the letters are frequently better written than the articles that follow. "The *New York Times* writes glorious letters," a juror says. "They should win a prize for that."

Occasionally an entry is accompanied by letters of condemnation. The day after the Stamford, Connecticut, *Advocate* submitted stories of contracting irregularities in the installation of the emergency 911 system, the Pulitzer staff received a letter, signed by several Stamford city officials, opposing the articles as unfair and unworthy of a Pulitzer Prize. ("They must be great stories," one juror said.) Still later came an addendum to the story: a follow-up *Advocate* article saying a disciplinary investigation had begun of city officials, including several who signed the letter to the Pulitzer staff.

▼ Issue No. 2 ▼ TIME

There isn't time to read every word. The average jury completes its work in fourteen hours over two and a half days. (The Editorial Cartooning jury usually goes home first.) That average allows seven minutes

per entry per judge. Actually we spend much less on most entries and closer to half an hour on the final few.

(That doesn't include time for bathroom breaks and petitioning. The members of this year's Editorial Writing jury, not content to judge seventy expressions of opinion, circulate their own — a petition opposing the Pentagon's reporting restrictions. No more than ten jurors sign.)

One effect of the time constraint is a distaste for Jell-O — Jell-O leads, that is. "If you haven't told me what the news is in the first six grafis, you've lost your chance," one juror says. For the second year, I hear jurors swear an oath to get to the point. "If we don't read it, how can we expect readers to?" a juror says.

My impression is that jurors try to judge each entry fairly in the time allowed. Juries can take more time if needed, but often finish early.

▼ Issue No. 3 ▼ CATEGORIES

A lot of table talk is devoted to sorting out boundaries. What, exactly, is Beat Reporting? That category, previously called Specialized Reporting, was changed this year to emphasize the need for sustained daily reporting. But among the 144 entries this year were many collections of columns, single investigative efforts, and six-month projects.

Is *The Boston Globe's* series on child labor, researched by a labor reporter over several months, an example of beat reporting? We decide it isn't, then are glad to hear it is nominated in National Reporting.

And how can we judge the beat coverage of *The Wall Street Journal's* national energy correspondent when the entry includes only four stories filed after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait?

It may be good to advise entrants, although it will increase the weight of entries, that besides the articles in each entry they may include as many other articles as they like, from any year, as supplementary material. It might save a juror from having to read a bio to determine if this subject is on the author's beat.

Although further definition of categories might help, vagueness allows for more variety. It's good that there is a place for the *Minneapolis Star Tribune's* beat on the historical context of current events and for *The Orange County Register's* new beats: traffic and shopping malls.

And I wonder how the jurors at the next table, in Explanatory Journalism, are able to compare *USA Today's* entry — a diagram of what happens to luggage after it is checked at the airport — with *The Washington Post's* series on the state of the Soviet army.

The only solution here is flexibility. Several

times I hear jurors say, "Our job is to find the best work on the table, whatever the category."

▼ Issue No. 4 ▼

THE LINDA GREENHOUSE
EFFECT

Linda Greenhouse of *The New York Times* may cover the Supreme Court superbly, and someday she may win a Pulitzer Prize, but I doubt she had much of a chance this year. Her entry was discussed for about five minutes at the Beat Reporting table, but that time was devoted to the 1989 abortion rights march. As everyone knows, Greenhouse marched to the steps of the Supreme Court, not as a reporter but as a participant. She was reprimanded by the *Times*; some thought she should be removed from the beat; and reporters across the country were reminded of old rules.

I don't know about the other jurors, but I know that her march influenced my opinion. I suspect that, with the competition as strong as it was and with another *Times* entry already having support around the table, she would not have made the finals, march or no march. But I also suspect that the march kept anyone from protesting when her work went on the refuse pile in the first round.

If it can hurt a competitor to be too familiar to the judges, it more often helps. "I don't have to read these stories; I read them when they came out in *The Wall Street Journal*," says a juror, who reads them again anyway.

I believe jurors try hard to look for quality work from smaller papers, and several such entries make the finals each year.

▼ Issue No. 5 ▼

JUDGING IN A VACUUM

Ur juror goody bag includes a copy of the March/April issue of the *Columbia Journalism Review*. I don't read the magazine until I get home from the judging. On page 9 is a letter to the editor from Jeff Cohen, executive director of Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting, in which he says FAIR has challenged the methodology and accuracy of articles by David Shaw, media critic for the *Los Angeles Times*, particularly his series alleging a pro-choice bias in abortion coverage in the press.

I know no details of FAIR's criticisms and have no idea if they are valid or substantial or merely ideological, but it nags at me a little that I learn of them after we have chosen Shaw as one of the three nominees in Beat Reporting.

If Shaw's editor had included FAIR's critique in the entry, with a proper rebuttal, it would not necessarily have diminished his chances. William K. Marimow of *The Philadelphia Inquirer* has given credit to a Philadelphia *Bulletin* columnist for inad-

vertently helping the *Inquirer* win the Pulitzer for Public Service in 1978. "We ran articles on cops beating the smitethrees out of suspects, and week after week the *Bulletin* columnist ran a point-by-point attack on our article," Marimow said. The *Inquirer* included the columns in its submission.

In the World Room jurors often ask: How do we know these stories are true? Were questions raised about them? Were corrections published? Have they resulted in libel suits or settlements? Was another paper ahead on the story?

Last year, on the Investigative Reporting jury, some of us left the table to make phone calls to check the clips to see which paper led the way on a story. I know of a juror who did the same this year, checking a magazine article and calling a journalist to resolve a vague doubt that was causing an entry to be rejected.

Usually these questions cannot be resolved in the time available or, to be more precise, they are resolved: anything risky goes on the floor.

The current system may value safety over genius, but it isn't possible for jurors to recognize all the risks. Too often the right questions won't occur to jurors, nor to the members of the Pulitzer board, until after a prize is awarded and an embarrassing controversy flares.

Perhaps what's needed is a little more openness. Two proposals:

▼ A sales pitch from the editor is nice, but it might help if entrants were asked to fill out a form — dates published, documents and records relied upon, hurdles overcome, the reporter's beat, and some tough ones: Were any questions raised about the truth or accuracy of this report? What are the rebuttals? Were corrections published or libel lawsuits settled? Such a form would give jurors one more piece of paper to read, but it would also give them more information and comfort.

▼ Announce the nominees after the judging and before the board chooses the winners. Since many nominees find out anyway that they are on the list sent on to the board, an earlier announcement won't prompt any more raised hopes or second-guessing — or lobbying — than already occurs. (Perhaps it's only a coincidence that *The New York Times* played on the front page articles by nominee Natalie Angier on April 4 and April 5, the two days the board was meeting in New York to choose the winners.) But it will allow someone with information or criticisms to step forward. Of course, it will also put pressure on the board to choose winners from among the jurors' recommendations.

If these proposals were adopted, board members would have to put up with a few more letters from public officials and interest groups. But wouldn't it be better to receive those letters before, not after, they award our highest honor? ♦

How do we know these stories are true?
Were questions raised about them?
Were corrections published?
Have they resulted in libel suits or settlements?

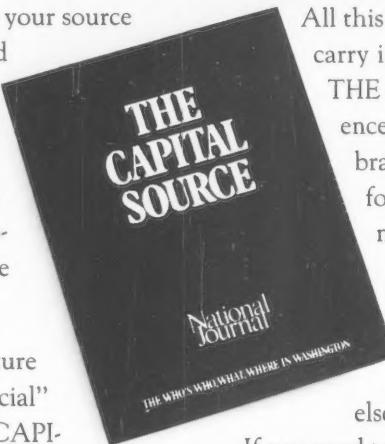
Now Available
The Spring 1991 Edition

CAPITAL CONTACTS

The Most Useful Washington Directory Ever Published

One comprehensive directory is your source for the names, addresses, and phone numbers of the people in power: THE CAPITAL SOURCE...including the new Members of Congress and a new at-a-glance section showing Public Affairs Officers for Executive branch departments.

The Washington power structure reaches far beyond the "official" government...so does THE CAPITAL SOURCE. Here you'll find comprehensive listings not only of the government, but of all the influential corporate, professional and media organizations in Washington as well.



All this information yet compact enough to carry in your briefcase!

THE CAPITAL SOURCE's quick-reference, tabbed sections cover the three branches of the Federal government; foreign embassies and local government; major corporations, unions and interest groups; trade associations, law firms, and agencies and PR firms; national, foreign and local news media; and everybody else who's anybody in Washington.

If you need to get things done in Washington, you can't afford to be without this one-of-a-kind directory.

Call or send for your copy today.

- Please send ____ copy(ies) of the **Spring 1991** Edition of THE CAPITAL SOURCE at \$29.95 each (plus \$2.95 Shipping and handling).
- Send me ____ copy(ies) of the Spring Edition **now** and the Fall 1991 Edition in October at \$54.95 (we pay the Shipping and handling).

Name _____ Title _____

Organization _____ Business Phone _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Check enclosed (payable to NATIONAL JOURNAL) (D.C. residents add 6% sales tax) (MO residents add appropriate tax)

Charge to: MasterCard Visa American Express

Signature _____

Account # _____ Exp. Date _____

For faster service, or for special discounts or bulk orders, call toll-free 1-800-356-4838
MAIL TO: National Journal, Post Office Box 46909, St. Louis, MO 63146

SCSCJR

TECHNOLOGY

WHO WILL REWIRE AMERICA?

BY MARK SILK

In one of the great power conflicts of the information age, newspaper publishers, in alliance with broadcast and cable TV operators, are going head to head with the seven giant regional Bell Telephone operating companies — the RBOCs (rhymes with tarbox). It is corporate trench warfare at its litigious best, conducted not only in Congress, the courts, and the Federal Communications Commission, but also, increasingly, before every state public service commission in the land. At stake are billions of dollars and the future of American telecommunications. And among the potential casualties is the honored, if not always observed, journalistic principle of separation of church and state — the independence of the editorial side from the corporate side.

So what's the casus belli?

In the 1982 Modified Final Judgment that determined the 1984 breakup of AT&T, U.S. District Judge Harold H. Greene prohibited the newly minted RBOCs from getting into three lines of business: interstate long-distance service, equipment manufacturing, and electronic information services. In his view, the RBOCs, with their monopolistic control over local telephone service, were in a position to overwhelm any competition

in these areas. Although Judge Greene has since relaxed the prohibitions in certain ways, they remain fundamentally intact.

The focus of concern for publishers and their allies is the restriction on information services. As defined by Greene, these range from electronic yellow pages to video transmission. They also include electronic mail and billboard services, which enable private citizens to communicate with each other.

After the AT&T breakup, the growth of information services proceeded at a rapid pace. Since the business of newspaper companies is information, it was only natural that some of the larger companies should try to find places beyond the pages of their newspapers to sell it. Dow Jones now makes more money on its business-related information services than it does on *The Wall Street Journal*. Ownership of several major electronic databases has made Knight-Ridder a major player as well.

For newspapers the immediate issue is consumer advertising. Whether through a form of voice mail or by way of personal computers and screen-equipped phones, electronic yellow pages could become a formidable advertising medium. Callers might electronically select a given product or retail outlet and receive up-to-the-minute information on pricing and product availability. Today, in printed form, yellow pages are an \$8 billion annual business; in tomorrow's electronic form they could be worth much more. Newspaper publishers worry about the effect on classified advertising, which constituted roughly 40 percent (or \$12 billion worth) of newspaper ad revenues in 1989. Short-term as they are, classified ads could easily be incorporated into continually updated electronic yellow pages.

Video is farther down the road. If allowed to compete in the cable business, the RBOCs could not only become the major conduit for all television but could ultimately run away with the video rental industry. That's because, in the RBOCs' hoped-for telefuture, the miracle of two-way switched video will allow you to call up at will the movie or TV show of your choice.

The ultimate RBOC dream is to make all telecommunications available to homes and businesses through a single

wire — *their wire*. But this will require replacing the nation's copper telephone wiring with high-capacity fiber-optic cable. As an internal BellSouth memo of a few years ago put it, "The Guy Who Gets Fiber To The House First Owns The House." A fiber telecommunications network, universally accessible on a common-carrier basis, might be a fine thing. Even now, the Japanese government is investing billions to put one of its own in place. But who is going to pay for installing ours? The RBOCs contend they must be allowed into lucrative information-service businesses if it is to be worth their while to make what could be a \$900 billion investment themselves.

THE ANPA VS. THE RBOCS

The American Newspaper Publishers Association opposes RBOC entry on antitrust grounds, arguing that the phone companies can use their control of the switches over which electronic information flows to take unfair advantage of the competition, for example by assembling information on potential customers' telephone-usage patterns. (The ANPA is prepared to let the RBOCs enter into information services, but only outside of local service regions, where they don't control the switches, and only when adequate regulatory safeguards are in place.)

Besides insisting that regulatory safeguards can prevent any abuse of power, the RBOCs contend that being prevented from communicating on their lines constitutes prior restraint on their freedom of speech. This is a complicated question on which the country's principal guardian of the First Amendment, the American Civil Liberties Union, has not yet taken a position. But even assuming that the restriction is constitutional, there is something unseemly about newspapers opposing someone else's ability to communicate because of predicted harm to their own commercial interests.

A year ago, the RBOCs won a significant victory when the District of Columbia's Circuit Court of Appeals

The ultimate RBOC dream is to make all telecommunications available to homes and businesses through a single wire — their wire

Mark Silk is an editorial writer and columnist for The Atlanta Constitution.

ordered Judge Greene to reconsider the information-services restriction. The court, acting at the behest of both the RBOCs and the Justice Department, instructed the judge to use a public interest standard as well as an antitrust one to decide whether to permit RBOC entry. Those who support lifting the law say it's reasonable to expect the judge to relax the restriction somewhat, though less than the RBOCs would want.

Meanwhile, Representative Edward Markey of Massachusetts has promised to introduce his long-promised bill that would ease the judge's restrictions on information services and manufacturing. A draft circulated last year would have let the RBOCs into information services other than cable TV outside their local service regions. It would also permit in-region electronic yellow pages without classified ads. That goes too far for the ANPA.

But a Markey bill will probably not be put on the table until Judge Greene has ruled, which could mean not until after the summer recess. And, as the failure of cable deregulation showed last session, Congress has a hard time dealing with anything in the telecommunications field, where any action is certain to upset some powerful interests. Cable deregulation is back again this year, as is Senator Ernest Hollings's bill that seeks to lift

Judge Greene's manufacturing restrictions. There is every expectation that these issues are going to be before Congress for some time.

COVERING A TOUCHY SUBJECT

For a newspaper, the underlying ethical challenge is clear: to provide fair treatment of an issue that intimately touches its business interests and those of the newspaper industry as a whole. This means, on the news pages, assuring evenhanded reporting and giving the issue coverage commensurate with its importance. Coverage of telecommunications in general-circulation newspapers has been spotty at best.

Far trickier than news coverage is the expression of editorial opinion. Over the past few years, only a handful of newspapers have pronounced editorially on the issues stemming from the Modified Final Judgment. Among those that have, support for removing the information-services restriction has been tendered only by *The Wall Street Journal*, which back in 1987 declared, "Those of us who believe the public is served by free economic competition have to believe that letting everyone compete will speed the delivery of increasingly diverse information services to a more widespread audience." This position, clearly at odds with the interests of Dow Jones, has not been

reiterated since.

If some publishers believe national telecommunications policy is an inside-the-Beltway affair too remote to concern themselves with, they are deluding themselves. That's because, thanks to recent court decisions, issues are increasingly likely to be decided at the state level.

In June 1990, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals overturned the FCC's so-called Computer III regulations, which stated that RBOCs do not need to establish separate subsidiaries in order to provide enhanced services such as voice mail. Building on a 1986 Supreme Court decision limiting the FCC's authority to set depreciation rates, the court held that the agency could not simply preempt state regulatory powers. Unless it were otherwise impossible to accomplish federal telecommunications goals, the states retained their rights to establish procedures to prevent the RBOCs from competing unfairly.

As a result, more and more newspaper companies are likely to involve themselves in state telecommunications regulation; and newspapers themselves will be confronted with covering ongoing regulatory matters to which their company is party. In this regard, Georgia provides an example of a situation in which many editorial page editors may soon find themselves.

WHAT'S DIFFERENT ABOUT FIBER

To appreciate fiber's potential impact on mass communications one has to appreciate its advantages over today's two dominant, but fundamentally different, mass media networks: the telephone and the cable network. A telephone network principally carries a "narrowband" voice signal over a "twisted-pair" copper wire; the signal goes two ways, is switched at a central office, and can connect two or more users nearly simultaneously. In comparison, a cable network principally carries a "broadband" video signal over a coaxial copper wire; the signal goes one way and is distributed from a central "headend" directly to each subscriber nearly simultaneously.

Optical fiber overcomes many of the inherent limitations of both systems.

First, it is a superior transport material. It is made from a durable, ultrapure, ultra-transparent glass (usually silicon dioxide or fused quartz) which, when cooled rapidly, solidifies without crystallizing so it can be elongated into a thin fibrous form. The diameter of a single fiber is about 100 microns, or the size of a human hair. Second, signal transmission is faster. A signal in the form of a light-beam is shot from a laser through the glass fiber and decoded at the back end. Third, fiber offers significantly greater carrying capacity. Fourth, and perhaps most important, it can carry both voice and video signals and it can distribute them either one-way or two-way....

Fiber deployment is an alternative video

distribution medium and permits expanded capacity and innovative services. However, the likelihood of telephone company delivery of video over fiber networks (and the telcos' goal of entering the programming business) upsets the relative equilibrium between broadcasters and cable operators. For example, telcos could challenge the cable industry's tiered-service model (i.e., basic, pay or premium, and pay-per-view) with video-on-demand while threatening both home video retailing and television program syndication. More innovative services, like two-way interactive videophones, are likely to help create private video networks analogous to "chat" telephone or computer-bulletin boards that draw viewers away

COX GETS INTO THE RBOCS FRAY

Cox Enterprises, the owner of *The Atlanta Journal* and *Constitution*, is the seventh-largest cable operator in the country, including one Georgia franchise. It also owns television and radio stations, and has gotten a leg up on the video business by acquiring a host of Blockbuster Video store franchises. In addition, Cox has aggressively gotten into the electronic-services business, both in audiotext (weather, stock information, and movie reviews) and videotext (classifieds, wire services, and the newspaper itself).

Cox entered Georgia's telephone regulation process a year ago, following controversy over a new depreciation schedule submitted for approval to the state Public Service Commission by the Southern Bell Telephone Company, a subsidiary of the South's RBOC, Bell-South. In its letter requesting accelerated depreciation on a range of plants and equipment, Southern Bell implied that the new schedule had previously been approved by the FCC. In fact, the FCC had specifically rejected the proposed rates on copper wire as excessively generous to the company. (Depreciating its copper wire more quickly would enable Southern Bell to replace it that much more cheaply with fiber-optic cable. This

OPTICS?

from professionally produced programs. Fiber can also serve as new CD-quality, radio-like networks. Equally critical, multimedia documents composed of pictures, sound, and text are likely to emerge as the next-generation information media. Analogous to multimedia compact discs, these media are likely to challenge the current print-based industries of newspapers, magazines, books, and catalogues....

The above excerpts are from "Fiber Optics & the Future of Television: A Primer for Independents," by David Rosen, an international marketing executive with Commodore, an electronics company. The article appeared in the Winter 1991 issue of NVR Reports, published by National Video Resources, a project of The Rockefeller Foundation.

AVIATION JOURNALISM AWARD

The 1991 Max Karant Award for Excellence in Aviation Journalism will be given for fair and insightful coverage of aviation.

- There are two categories of entries: print and broadcast.
- A \$1,000 award will be given in each category based on works published or broadcast in 1990 only.
- Deadline for entries is August 1, 1991.

For more information or to obtain entry forms, call (301) 695-2160 or write:

AOPA Communications Division
421 Aviation Way
Frederick, MD 21701



Woodrow Wilson Center 1991 Media Studies Essay Contest

Wanted:

Analytical essay of 5,000-20,000 words on "American journalistic performance"—print or broadcast. First prize: \$15,000.

Deadline:

September 3, 1991

For More Information write to:

Lawrence W. Lichy
Media Studies Project
**Woodrow Wilson International
Center For Scholars**
370 L'Enfant Promenade, S.W., Suite 704
Washington, D.C. 20024

Made possible by a grant from the William H. Donner Foundation

Answers. Contacts. Background.

Have a question about Phillips Petroleum? Or the energy industry? These media relations specialists can get answers for you:

George Minter	(918) 661-5204
Rob Phillips	(918) 661-9326
Jere Smith	(918) 661-4982

Call or write: Media Relations Department, 16A-2 Phillips Building, Bartlesville, Oklahoma 74004.



ALICIA PATTERSON JOURNALISM FELLOWSHIPS

27th Annual Competition

Applications are being accepted from print journalists with at least five years professional experience. One-year grants of \$30,000 are awarded for the pursuit of independent projects of significant interest.

Application deadline: October 1.
Fellows must be U.S. citizens.

For applications and further program information, write:

The Alicia Patterson Foundation
1001 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Suite 1250
Washington, D.C. 20004
(301) 951-8512

would hasten the day it could supply its customers with video — a matter of no small concern to the cable television industry.)

The editorial board of *The Atlanta Constitution* learned of the letter through its own sources and the newspaper attacked Southern Bell for misrepresentation in an editorial that appeared the morning the Public Service Commission was due to take up the matter. Independently (though the phone company hardly thought so), Cox chairman James Cox Kennedy had a letter protesting Southern Bell's behavior delivered to the public service commissioners that same morning.

This was not the first time the *Constitution* had criticized Southern Bell, but it marked a clear departure for Cox. The company now decided formally to intervene in Southern Bell's regulatory affairs, first in a newly scheduled depreciation hearing and then in a comprehensive rate case (in which the depreciation issues were ultimately included). Articles began appearing in local periodicals about the Cox-Bell feud.

Southern Bell protested its treatment by the newspaper in letters to the editor. In May 1990, a letter from its vice-president for Georgia, Carl Swearingen, stated, "The Cox conglomerate continues to use the power of its editorial privileges to serve the political and economic advantages of its subsidiary companies. While this may serve the Cox organization well, it most certainly will delay the delivery of information-age technology to all Georgians."

In fact, Cox had not been ordering up editorials. Moreover, whenever a question of corporate self-interest arose, the editorial would point it out. But disclosing the corporate interest while taking the corporation's side did not demonstrate editorial independence either. The test of church-state separation was whether there could be a divergence between the editorial line and the corporate one.

In Southern Bell's 1990 rate case, the

state Public Service Commission reduced telephone rates by \$180 million but did give the company significantly accelerated depreciation on its copper wire. Bell appealed the ruling in court and, in due course, negotiated an out-of-court settlement with the PSC staff that reduced the judgment to \$149 million while keeping accelerated depreciation rates. Cox, which stood to benefit so long as lengthy court proceedings kept Southern Bell from claiming its accelerated depreciation, opposed the settlement. Despite this, the *Constitution* ended up taking the position that telephone ratepayers would be best served if the PSC agreed to the \$149 million deal.

While corporate executives never find it easy to acknowledge that the public interest may not be identical to their company's, this has come particularly hard to newspaper publishers, accustomed as they are to consider themselves tribunes of the people. And these days, beset with declining readership and ad lineage, they see before them an uncertain future even without RBOCs threatening their revenue streams. What could be more in the public interest than for publishers to do everything in their power to protect newspapers' profitability?

For their part, the RBOCs believe that the force is with them, that the power of technology and the deregulatory spirit of the age will eventually cut them loose from Judge Greene's trammels.

WHERE DOES THE PUBLIC INTEREST LIE?

So far, the least active participant in the telecommunications debate has been the public at large, which except for expressing unhappiness with local cable TV rates appears to be largely oblivious to what is going on. Where, in fact, does the public interest lie? This year, the American Civil Liberties Union has established an information-technology project to try to find out.

"The ACLU traditionally is sympathetic to the claims that all should be able to speak," says Jerry Berman, the director of the project. "But we are concerned about what kinds of safeguards are in place so everyone can have nondiscriminatory access."

"We think this is the most fundamental First Amendment issue of the twenty-first century," he adds. "We're talking about the future of speech." ♦

CJR IS MORE THAN A “MUST-READ”...



OPINION

It's a must-subscribe! For only \$18, we'll deliver CJR directly to your desktop or doorstep. Now that's an offer you can't afford to pass up.

- Yes, I agree. Begin my personal subscription today.

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Payment enclosed Please bill me

Add \$4 for Canadian and foreign subscription.
Please allow 4-6 weeks for delivery of your first copy.



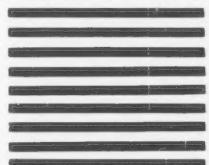
NO POSTAGE
NECESSARY
IF MAILED
IN THE
UNITED STATES

BUSINESS REPLY MAIL
FIRST CLASS PERMIT NO. 636 MARION, OHIO

POSTAGE WILL BE PAID BY ADDRESSEE

**COLUMBIA
JOURNALISM
REVIEW**

P.O. BOX 1943
MARION, OH 43306-2043



JUDGMENT CALL

TO STING OR NOT TO STING?

BY MARCEL DUFRESNE

By most standards of investigative reporting, *Newsday's* plan to document racial discrimination in Long Island's real estate industry had to rank among the most ambitious, elaborate, and expensive undercover operations ever contemplated by a newspaper.

Newsday's staff devised the undercover plan in 1989 during early reporting for a groundbreaking series about segregation. If the scheme worked, it would expose an ugly and illegal discriminatory practice. But it also raised questions about deception, among other things.

The idea itself was hardly new: send out trained "testers" — black couples and white couples posing as home buyers — to see if real estate agents steer them, respectively, to predominantly black or white neighborhoods. Several newspapers and TV stations had done such testing for stories about segregation, but never on the scale envisaged by the mid-level editors who planned it at *Newsday*. The plan was a researcher's dream: a massive, scientifically designed experiment that would statistically measure the prevalence of racial steering in Long Island's huge real estate industry. But the plan also had the makings of a logistical nightmare. One scenario would have required up to forty trained testers — some reporters, the rest actors from New York City — each with a cover story, including an employment history and references. The testers would visit

200 randomly selected real estate offices and record how they were treated. Backing them up would be a separate office, with a bank of phones and a full-time staff to verify each tester's cover. To be effective, the operation would have to be kept secret even from most of the newspaper's staff.

Racial steering is illegal under state and federal law, but New York officials and many blacks contend that the practice is widespread and has intensified segregation on Long Island. Housing reporters Michael Alexander and Robert Fresco could find little proof of this, however, other than a few personal accounts of blacks who said they had been steered and a handful of prosecutions by state and county officials. "A steering test would have been the smoking gun," says Alexander.

But as the proposal inched up through *Newsday's* hierarchy during the winter and spring of 1989, it encountered formidable objections, including concerns that it smelled like a sting, that it couldn't be kept secret, that it was just too complicated to pull off. The discussion unfolded this way.

DECEMBER 1988: Team leader Adrian Peracchio first suggests that reporters

conduct limited testing to collect details and color for their stories about steering. Project editor Joye Brown is skeptical. *Newsday* generally opposes undercover operations, and she is not about to propose undercover testing just to make stories lively. But she wants hard figures, and the idea intrigues her. The team's education reporters, for example, are compiling a huge database from which to analyze spending levels, test scores, and other statistical measures to explain inequities in educational quality between schools in white and black neighborhoods. Brown thinks testing might provide comparable evidence for the housing stories.

Later in the winter, Brown dispatches Peracchio and Alexander to learn the who, why, and how of testing. The reporters know that housing advocates and law-enforcement agencies use testing to collect evidence against agents suspected of steering. As for the media, a computer search turns up several cases of undercover testing by newspapers, including *The Miami Herald*, the Bergen County, New Jersey, *Record*, and *Newsday* itself, and by a few television stations that had used hidden cameras. All had found illegal steering, but in even the most ambitious stories, testers visited

COLOR LINE: Juanita and Dennis Fields told *Newsday* reporters working on a segregation series that they had been steered from a white neighborhood into a black one. But editors wanted to get beyond such anecdotal accounts and measure the prevalence of racial steering by Long Island realtors, using an elaborate undercover-testing scheme.



Bill Davis/Newsday

Marcel Dufresne is an assistant professor of journalism at the University of Connecticut in Storrs.

fewer than a dozen sales offices. Typically, the local real estate industry denied that steering was common and blamed violations on a few unscrupulous agents.

There are several thousand real estate offices on Long Island, a strip of land roughly twenty miles wide that begins east of Manhattan and stretches 100 miles into the Atlantic. Most homes are owner-occupied and range from modest lower-middle class tract houses to palatial oceanfront estates. Brown knows that measuring steering in such a diverse market would challenge even *Newsday's* resources. But as the team delves deeper she becomes convinced that there is a way, and her boss, Long Island editor Charlotte H. Hall, agrees. Ginerly, they approach managing editor Howard Schneider, a *Newsday* veteran who thinks most undercover reporting is "unsophisticated and unnecessary."

"I start with the premise that we don't do undercover reporting unless there is no other way to get the story," says Schneider, whose first reaction to the proposal was, in his words, "cranky and negative." Couldn't the series document steering by interviewing brokers, former agents, and black homeowners who claim they have been steered? Yes, Hall and Brown reply, but the material would be almost entirely anecdotal. If *Newsday* wants to assess the prevalence of steering across Long Island, among people of all incomes, then massive testing is the only way. After numerous meetings and memos, Schneider agrees. The editors also agree that if they do not find evidence of widespread steering, that too will be a story.

SPRING 1989: Research for the proposal moves forward, even after Brown goes on maternity leave in March. Peracchio finds Kale Williams, director of a fair housing agency in Chicago and one of the country's foremost testing experts. They exchange letters and finally Williams flies in from Chicago to help present the case for testing, which he calls "a valid technique recognized not only by social scientists but by the courts." He tells the editors that steering can be blatant or subtle. In some real estate offices, for example, both white and black testers may be treated courteously but shown houses in very different areas. Perhaps an agent might deny to a

black family that houses are available in a certain area, or the agent might use "vigorous salesmanship" on white buyers while "they just go through the motions" for blacks.

Williams assures *Newsday* that it is possible to design a large-scale test that would show the extent of steering on Long Island with 95 percent accuracy. They settle on a working proposal with 200 matched tests, using ten white couples and ten black couples. On that scale, Williams is confident that both secrecy and statistical reliability can be achieved.

Williams, who has worked with reporters in Chicago on smaller steering tests, sees *Newsday's* project as in a class apart. If it found widespread steering, that would challenge the belief that in modern America a black family with means can buy a house anywhere.

Schneider is impressed with Williams's "very intelligent presentation," but he is adamant that though Williams might be hired as a consultant, *Newsday* should run its own operation. By now the three editors — Brown, Hall, and Schneider — are convinced that large-scale testing is both workable and important enough to the series to propose relaxing the policy on undercover reporting. The question is, can they convince *Newsday* editor Anthony Marro? In May, after months spent refining it, a detailed plan is sent to him.

That same month, one state away, *The Hartford Courant* runs a front-page story describing discrimination it found when reporters tested fifteen real estate agencies in and around Hartford (see Laurel, CJR, November/December 1989). Two weeks later, the *Courant's* reader representative, Henry McNulty, writes a column saying the paper shouldn't have gone undercover, even if it was the only way to get the story. By misrepresenting themselves, he writes, the reporters lied.

SUMMER 1989: By all indications Marro is considering the proposal seriously. In meetings and memos he asks

increasingly tough questions, sending the editors scrambling for answers.

Interestingly, the cost — estimated as high as \$50,000 — does not seem to be a factor. Instead, Marro's concerns fall into four categories: logistics, deception, secrecy, and what he calls "threshold." While covering the Justice Department for *Newsday* and *The New York Times*, Marro had seen that agency's questionable use of undercover stings. Though he doesn't see the steering test as a sting exactly, he has reservations about the lack of probable cause. The proposal calls for picking agents at random — the foundation of statistical analysis — and that troubles Marro.

"The question is, should there be a threshold of presumed bad conduct before a newspaper unleashes this sort of thing on unsuspecting people?" Marro says. There are times, he says, "when it is perfectly justified for newspapers to do a certain amount of undercover work, but I think there has to be a threshold and I'm not sure we had it here with the individual realtors." Brown and Hall counter that housing patterns on Long Island are clear evidence of some level of steering.

But Marro has other concerns: reporters "are not necessarily equipped by training or talent" to work undercover. If actors are used, how will their behavior be monitored for consistency? Nuances of speech and body language could affect how agents treat "buyers." And since actors aren't trained reporters, how could *Newsday* trust their accounts in writing stories? Someone suggests having the actors wear body microphones, but Marro is skeptical: "Does the process of trying to control it get us involved in some things we really don't want to do?"

Finally, Marro worries that an operation of this size can't be kept secret. One leak, he says, and "every fax machine on Long Island" would start humming.

Just before Labor Day 1989, nearly ten months after testing was first suggested, Marro says no.

In the end, he says, technical obstacles weigh more heavily than any reluctance to go undercover. Marro worries that 200 undercover visits would produce only broad generalizations about the prevalence of steering, not the definitive numbers that *Newsday* was counting.

on. Even that large a sample, he contends, would not allow the paper to compare steering in different parts of the island and among people of different incomes. "I saw many downsides," he says. "If anything went bad, that could possibly compromise and complicate a worthwhile series."

SEPTEMBER 1990: More than a year after the testing plan is abandoned, the series — A WORLD APART: SEGREGATION ON LONG ISLAND — runs over ten days. Exhaustively researched, it uses moving personal accounts and startling statistics to bring readers face to face with racial segregation. It portrays Long Island as among "the most segregated areas in America," a place where many of the 200,000 black residents are trapped in neighborhoods beset by drugs and crime, where the police are unresponsive, and where the schools are inferior.

On day nine, two stories describing what one headline called the THE STING OF STEERING appear, based on interviews with the usual sources — blacks who have been steered, brokers, agents, housing advocates, and state prosecutors.

LOOKING BACK: In August of 1989, some staffers had been upset with the decision to kill the steering test. Mike Alexander, whose early work helped set the testing idea in motion, wondered openly in the newsroom whether one unstated reason the plan was dropped was that management feared losing real estate advertising. "I've learned in investigative reporting there's a *good* reason and a *real* reason," he says. But Robert Fresco, the other housing reporter, says he has "no solid reason" to suspect such a motive. For his part, Marro says, "If we were concerned about alienating the realtors on Long Island we wouldn't have started this [segregation] project."

Given that undercover reporting is frowned upon in some editorial circles, it's reasonable to wonder whether editors at *Newsday* thought the testing plan might jeopardize the segregation series's chances to win a major prize. (*Newsday* nominated the series for a Pulitzer Prize this year, in the public service category, but didn't win.) Undercover reporting came under attack in the early 1980s when the *Chicago Sun-Times* nearly won, but eventually lost, a Pulitzer Prize

for stories about payoffs and corruption among city inspectors. The paper had opened the Mirage Bar and staffed it with reporters and photographers to collect evidence. Though the stories were impressive, some members of the Pulitzer advisory board felt that the ends didn't justify the paper's deceptive means. Every editor connected with *Newsday*'s racial steering proposal, however, insisted that winning contests was never a consideration. "It never entered my mind. I never smelled any of that," says Hall, the Long Island editor.

Today, the team's editors and reporters are proud of their series. Even Alexander, who seemed the most upset right after the decision to kill the steering test, says he wants "to dwell on the positive side of the series. I'm very proud of it."

Joye Brown, who with Charlotte Hall had the most invested in the testing proposal, takes it as a triumph that the idea got as far as it did. "Did we need the test? The truth of the matter is no, we didn't." But, she adds, "always in the back of my mind it's just sitting there, something that could have been." ♦

NEED INFORMATION ABOUT INSURANCE?



If your question is about insurance for space shuttles, oil refineries, ships or planes, we can't help.

But if it's about personal insurance, we can. When it comes to insuring automobiles, homes, and small boats, we're the largest in the business. We're also among the biggest writers of individual life and health insurance.

Next time you have a question about personal insurance, call one of these numbers.

State Farm Insurance
Home Office: Bloomington, Ill.



ON THE JOB

WHO GETS QUOTE APPROVAL?

BY PHILIP WEISS

"Our public is people who love pictures, not the guy who never steps into a museum — I don't give a shit what he thinks," William Rubin said, reflecting on his two decades as director of painting and sculpture at the Museum of Modern Art.

Actually that's not what Rubin said. What he said was, "Our public is people who love pictures, not the guy who's at McDonald's but never steps into a museum — I don't give a shit what he thinks."

I changed the quote when I was writing up my interview with Rubin for *Art in America* because Rubin insisted on it. Using "McDonald's" made him sound too elitist, he said, and he had only granted the interview on the condition that he could approve quotes.

I've broken the agreement here because the practice it exemplifies seems to me to be so widespread that it deserves more attention. (I can further justify, or rationalize, doing so because CJR does not serve Rubin's public, the art world.) Quote approval is the latest twist in the art of getting someone to talk, and it has gained the same tacit acceptance from journalists that anonymous quotation got twenty years ago. The practice clearly has a price, but, like other arrangements involving quotation, including the cleaned-up nature of most published quotes (see "The, Uh, Quotation Quandary," CJR, May/June 1990), no one likes to acknowledge or discuss it.

First, a definition. By "quote approval"

Philip Weiss is a free-lance writer who often writes about the news media.

"I mean an agreement struck during an interview requiring the journalist to read back what he or she is attributing to the source before the article goes to press. The agreement may also entail telling the source the context in which the quote is to be used. In the follow-up phone call there's negotiation over what will be used, and how. The result is that the source has successfully involved himself or herself in the writing process at a late stage, often when the reporter is sitting at the computer terminal. (At times, I've discovered, this process can involve the collaborative crafting of a quote.)

The practice seems to have evolved as an elaboration of other sourcing concessions. "We enter into agreements with sources constantly," says Richard Harwood, the ombudsman for *The Washington Post*. "We will agree to talk on background, we will agree to talk on deep background, we will agree to talk off the record. As to whether [reporters] will agree to check quotes back, I'm sure that at times they do."

Quote approval is quite different from that other encroachment on the reader's right to know — anonymous sourcing. Anonymity is generally

given to friendly sources, people who can advance a writer's thesis. Quote approval, on the other hand, tends to be demanded by subjects who are the focus of potential criticism — like William Rubin and the other museum directors I interviewed, whose decisions to sell off art works from their museums' permanent collections so they can buy new ones have drawn enormous attention.

"There are two choices a reporter has," Kirk Varnedoe, Rubin's replacement at the Museum of Modern Art, told me when I asked him about his quote-approval policy. "The reporter can say, 'No, I will not call you back on quotes,' in which case I will practically write out everything I'm saying so I can make sure that it will be exactly what I meant to say, or he can agree to call back, in which case I get to say, 'That's not...' 'If you had the sentence before that, it would change it....'"



C.R. Nicolaus Ascoli

Varnedoe's bargaining stance, of course, contains an implicit threat: I don't have to talk to you. Rubin was explicit when I asked him about his motivation. "After some bad experiences, I simply took the position, Look, I'm not obliged to speak to anybody," he said. "And therefore if I'm going to speak to them at their request and they want to quote me, I want to insert into the situation something that gives me a fair chance of being correctly heard."

Possibly these two gunslingers of quotation are bluffing, but the curious thing is that no one calls them on it. "People want to see the context of their quotes, and we can give them that," says Steven Henry Madoff, executive editor of *ARTnews*. "This is something that's done, it's a standard thing to do." Varnedoe says, "It's a policy I follow across the board. I don't discriminate." Art critic Michael Kimmelman of the *Times* allows that he may have agreed to these terms. "I don't remember," he says. "It might be in Kirk [Varnedoe's] case that on the one or two occasions I've interviewed him for an article, that he asked me to read it back. I don't really remember that. But, I mean, he might...."

The practice appears to be fairly widespread. A journalist friend reports that a recent interview with a State Department official was followed by several faxes back and forth in which he and the source struggled over the language that was to be attributed to the source. Congressman John D. Dingell, the powerful Michigan Democrat, made the request of me at the start of an interview last year (ostensibly so he could clean up his language), and, although I did not accede in that case, Dingell made it clear that many reporters quietly accepted the terms. Political stature has little to do with it. I got the same demand from William Wilson, former mayor of Rancho Mirage, California, as he sat in his son's patio-furniture store.

"I have heard that a lot more people wanted this," says Karen Elliott House, *The Wall Street Journal* vice-president and columnist. "I gather there is more pressure partly because people mistrust the press more and, as the press plays this game, word gets around and everyone feels cheated if they haven't [gotten these terms]. People will say, 'Well, *Newsweek* lets us do this.' The [Jour-

nal's] London bureau chief was rabid on the subject." House says the importance of "resisting" such claims "is less passionately indoctrinated now than before." ("We discourage our reporters from reading back quotations to sources," says Diana Pearson, communications director for *Newsweek*. "On some occasions, to avoid anonymous sourcing, we will read back a background quote in an effort to get it on the record.")

Quote approval is best understood as a marker of journalistic independence, or the lack of it. In the last few years the adversarial posture that had once been fashionable among reporters, epitomized by Joan Didion's memorable line "Writers are always selling somebody out," has given way to a more accommodating role. The city rooms of monopoly newspapers have the aura of insurance companies, and the romance that once surrounded investigative reporters today seems to have attached itself to journalists who write about celebrities and sometimes befriend them.

For another thing, the immediacy of television news makes print reporting seem that much more negotiable. Journalism may be the rough draft of history, but sources know that several revisions take place before that draft is circulated.

"Almost down to the last little hamlet in America people are incredibly media-savvy," says Jane Mayer, a reporter for *The Wall Street Journal*. "You find people who don't even look like they've ever read a newspaper and the first thing they say to you is, 'This is off the record.'"

No surprise, then, that more high-profile subjects have evolved even more restrictive terms. When Mayer was reporting *Landslide: The Unmaking of the President*, she and co-author Doyle McManus, a reporter for the *Los Angeles Times*, struck deals with several sources, agreeing to get their approval on quotes and, in some cases, context as well. Making the agreements raised questions in her mind but was necessary to gaining the sources' trust, she says.

"Sometimes reporters play a game to try to get people to hang themselves by saying something foolish," Mayer says. "I think that if you realize that what you're really trying to do is get people to give the essence of their thoughts the

INVESTIGATE JOURNALISM

At the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism

Professional-level, noncredit courses for those in the business — and those who want to be.

COMPUTER-ASSISTED REPORTING

June 3-7

PROFESSIONAL WRITING SKILLS

June 3-5 or June 10-12

BUSINESS REPORTING

June 17-21

SCIENCE REPORTING

June 17-21

MAGAZINE EDITING

June 17-21

MAGAZINE WRITING

June 17-21 or June 24-28

BROADCAST REPORTING

Two weeks: June 17-28

Tuition:

\$1,000 for each week;
\$600 for Professional Writing Skills

For information and an application, write or call:

CAREER INSTITUTES
SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY
NEW YORK, N.Y. 10027

(212) 854-4150

Columbia University is an affirmative action/equal opportunity institution.

way they want their thoughts to come across, that's a fair reason for people to cooperate with an interview."

In the end, Mayer was pleased to find that her subjects, notably former national security adviser Robert C. McFarlane, actually strengthened their comments when they were shown the context in which their remarks appeared. Her losses struck her as minor — for instance, when one source changed a characterization of an official from "plodding" to "thoughtful." All the same, she's aware

she was "working around some sort of a journalistic taboo."

Scratch just about any journalist and that taboo comes right to the surface. Karen Elliott House says, "We really feel passionately at the *Journal* that you tell everybody at the same time: no one should know what's in the paper ahead of the time we're published." When I repeated to Grace Glueck of *The New York Times* Kirk Varnedoe's assertion that he routinely obtains quote approval, she said, "That's baloney," before con-

ceding that she may at times have run quotes past sources to check for possible misinterpretation or inaccuracy. "No, frankly I haven't encountered that," her colleague Michael Kimmelman said to me at first — until I asked him specifically about Varnedoe.

How much is lost if that taboo is violated? Clearly, fewer officials would be embarrassed. More important, when a reporter involves an official in crafting a story, the implicit pact between the independent reporter and the reader is broken. Quote approval can be seen as a form of insider trading — elites sharing the inside dope before passing on a diluted version to the general public.

The press's quiet acceptance of quote approval surely owes something to the fact that reporters are an influential elite and are themselves often the subject of interviews. They have had a taste of their own medicine and they don't like it. Their own papers have policies saying that anyone who calls asking them questions is to be passed on to the p.r. department. In these circumstances, it would be hypocritical for them to insist on open accountability from officials.

Quote approval arises from real and urgent factors: it answers journalists' needs to explore people's thoughts on subjects and assuages sources' fears about what happens when they expose their thinking. The sophisticated deal they make may be mutually beneficial — may at times even serve the public good — but all the same it's a form of low-level corruption that both parties accept but don't talk about. It would probably take a scandal — say the admission by a reporter that he had held back an explosive piece of information because his source had not approved its release — to make publications take a stand against the practice.

For my own part, while I'm sure I will find myself yielding control over quotes again, I find the arrangement obnoxious. I went into journalism to give more open expression to ideas and personalities, not rein them in. These days I'm experimenting with other solutions to the underlying trust problem — being candid at the start about my point of view, for instance, and about what I'm hoping to get from the source. Quote approval seems too big a concession to arid institutionalism. ♦

What in the world do you want to know?

ASSIGNMENT:

Do a story on major food producer's national roll-out of diet dessert featuring new health product.
NEED: Background, market strategy, the competition, and possible health effects.



TO DO: Search DIALOG®, the most complete and powerful information system available anywhere in the world.

- PTS NEW PRODUCT ANNOUNCEMENTS™ (FILE 621) for general product information, marketing/packaging plans, and industry expert comments.
- First Release™ (BEGIN FIRST) collection of newswires for late breaking information.
- D&B's FINANCIAL RECORDS PLUS™ (FILE 519) for company background, financials, and principals.
- MEDLINE® (FILES 152-155) for product chemistry and effect of food additives.
- PAPERS (BEGIN PAPERS) for broad, historical perspectives as presented in more than 20 full-text newspapers.

DIALOG is the world's largest online information supplier with nearly 400 sources available. And now it's even easier to get the information you need with DIALOG Menus™, the menu-assisted approach to searching over 220 DIALOG files.

If your organization is already using DIALOG, you can do the search yourself or ask your librarian for a DIALOG search. Or, call 1-800/3-DIALOG (800/334-2564) to find out how you can get a world of knowledge at your fingertips.

DIALOG Information Services, Inc.
A Knight Ridder Company

Bringing you the world's knowledge.

© 1991 Dialog Information Services, Inc. 3460 Hillview Avenue, Palo Alto, CA 94304. All rights reserved.
DIALOG is a servicemark of Dialog Information Services, Inc., Registered U.S. Patent and Trademark office.

BUSINESS

OPINION

THE UPSIDE TO A DOWNTURN

BY DANIEL LAZARE

One of the nice things about turning an economic corner is the new angle of vision it provides onto coming economic events. Take the American economy (please). During the frenetic, consumer-driven 1980s, the common belief was that those businesses that catered most energetically to individual tastes and desires would be the ones to survive. During the recessionary early '90s, conventional wisdom says the same. But a decidedly unconventional wisdom has arisen, which holds that individual consumer preferences will matter less in the years to come, as will saturation advertising, high-intensity marketing, and the hyper-salesmanship that also characterized the '80s.

The debate is important for all branches of the economy, including the media, which, with the mushrooming of consumer sections in newspapers, specialized magazines, and cable TV channels, have hardly been immune to the marketing craze. A return to frenetic '80s-style consumerism as soon as the current recession is over would mean a renewed

emphasis on packaging, design, and sales pitches geared to ever more narrowly defined audiences — from teenaged hang-gliders and vacationing physicians to ski bums in search of deep powder. A break with the past, on the other hand, would suggest a return to mass audiences bound by common interests and tastes. Lest cheering erupt among journalists tired of writing for atomized and self-absorbed readers, it should also be pointed out that if the contrarians prove correct about the direction of the U.S. economy, there will be fewer media in general and therefore fewer media employees.

Much depends on the severity of the recession. A short economic interruption such as that predicted by the Bush administration and many business economists as of early April means chances are good that the economy will pick up where it left off. A deeper downturn, as predicted by a substantial minority of economists, means a deeper shakeout and hence a more profound economic transformation.

In order to understand what's at stake, it's necessary to review what has happened in recent years to three interlocking components of the consumer econ-

omy — retailing, advertising, and the media that deliver the ads. The first thing is that the mass market, once the hallmark of Madison Avenue, has given way to a collection of increasingly specialized sub-markets consisting of yuppies, affluent suburbanites, dinks (couples with dual incomes, no kids), and so forth, each group further broken down into subsets and sub-subsets by an army of economists, psychologists, and demographers trained in the micro-analysis of consumer trends.

As the marketplace has diversified, the art of reaching customers has risen to a level of almost baroque complexity. This is true in journalism, too. Publishers who once thought a newspaper equaled news plus sports plus comics have learned to organize elaborate focus groups to find out not only whether subscribers want more fashion features, local coverage, or whatever, but which subscribers want what — i.e., whether they're the upscale readers advertisers

Excess production leads to consumer overload, which leads to curious changes in consumer psychology

“ ”

THE GLUT FACTOR: *The proliferation of products and advertising in the 1980s supported a media explosion, and in an era of glut, consumers grew picky about what they read and watched. Now, a shakeout may be coming.*



CJR/Harvey Wang

Dan Lazare writes about economics and other issues for The New York Observer and is a frequent contributor to CJR.

crave or the upscale ones they don't care about. Editors have learned to think of readers as groups of customers.

The second thing to consider is: why? Why this tendency toward ever-narrower specialization and ever-finer market analysis? One reason is that high-intensity market analysis breeds yet more high-intensity market analysis, all based on the belief that one can never know too much about a customer. Thanks to supermarket bar codes and credit-card records, moreover, the process of intensive, specialized marketing promises to continue indefinitely as marketers and direct-mail advertisers compile increasingly detailed computerized profiles of each customer's likes and dislikes. Or so the marketing enthusiasts say. But a small number of academic economists see this process as merely a phase in a cycle. America, they point out, has gone through similar bouts of market complexity and feverish consumerism before, only to swing back to market simplification and consolidation a few years later.

One such period was the 1920s which, as Jay W. Forrester, professor emeritus and senior lecturer at MIT's Sloan School of Management, points out, saw the popularization of consumer credit, the birth of the modern advertising industry, and an enormous explosion in the variety and sheer number of consumer goods vying for the attention of a limited buying public. According to a 1920s study of one small town's buying habits, there were no fewer than 101 different brands among 210 purchased pianos, for example, and an equally impressive array of makes of cars, radios, phonographs, and washing machines.

But, while at the time it seemed the trend would go on forever, it didn't. Rather, the economy slowed and a shakeout ensued. Weaker products fell by the wayside in great numbers and, with fewer companies vying in the marketplace, the pendulum swung toward retrenchment, consolidation, and simplification. Consumers in the 1930s who could still afford pianos had fewer brands to choose from and fewer ads to wade through in making their choice. So far did the pendulum swing, in fact, that the effects were felt right through the '50s, when the chief complaint of sociologists like Vance Packard and William

H. Whyte, Jr., was that society was too homogeneous and conformist, that members of the great American middle class all seemed to wear the same clothes, buy the same appliances, and listen to the same pop tunes. With just three companies to divvy up 90 percent of the U.S. auto market, the mass consumption of the '50s was the polar opposite of both the chaotic markets of the '20s and the ultra-specialized markets of the '80s.

Why the oscillation between extremes? Forrester, an adherent of the theory of the economic "long wave" spanning six or seven decades, argues that the U.S. economy since the 1970s has seen a steady buildup in excess productive capacity — "overproduction of the capital plant," as he puts it, "in the form of too much housing, office buildings, shopping centers, and manufacturing facilities." Excess capital plant means excess production, which means too many goods chasing too few consumers. This, in turn, means that society's focus shifts from making things to owning, buying, and selling them, from manufacturing to advertising, retailing, and marketing, from production to packaging and hype, all of which are designed to push goods into the hands of consumers. An example: certain over-the-counter cold remedies, as *The Wall Street Journal* recently pointed out, contain the same ingredients in the same quantities and are made by the same companies. "All that actually distinguishes the medications," the *Journal* added, "are the marketing strategies used to push them."

Such excess production leads to consumer overload, which leads to curious changes in consumer psychology — to boredom, for example, to fickleness, to a feeling of being stuffed to the gills. During the glory days of the American auto industry in the '50s and '60s, the annual unveiling of the Big Three's latest models was a major event. Today, with more than two dozen auto manufacturers, domestic and foreign, vying for a piece

of the American market, there are so many makes and models that few people can be bothered to learn the difference. This boredom, meanwhile, leads to the widely noted phenomenon of "grazing" — couch potatoes zapping through channels rather than watching a single program; readers leafing through magazines instead of reading them; shoppers wandering through malls, making only one or two purchases.

The grazing phenomenon, in turn, leads to certain changes in retailing and product design. Confronted with an overwhelming number of choices, jaded consumers inevitably gravitate toward items that are eye-catching, and away from the solid but dull. Perhaps the best analogy is that of an elaborate buffet table at some endless event, loaded down with everything from caviar to Viennese pastries. The typical overstuffed guest doesn't head for the veggies, but for the prettily arranged snacks, items that look great but are not particularly good for you.

The media buffet is similar. As the number of consumer magazine titles has proliferated, for example (up 50 percent in the 1980s alone), enormous resources have gone into snappy editing and graphic design, marketing, and demographic analysis. The glitz quotient has gone up as content (and true individuality) has withered. With the M.B.A. invasion, newspapers have seen a similar emphasis on packaging and selling the news (as opposed to merely delivering it), resulting in a profusion of special sections and bite-sized editorial features meant to appeal to distracted, overloaded readers.

In an era of glut, consumers grow picky about what they read and watch. Thus, for example, reporting about grim conditions in the inner cities, though perhaps only a few miles away from many readers and viewers, is hard to sell because middle-class consumers who pick and choose their reality much as they choose their fashions can't "relate" to it; because poor people are a turn-off for advertisers and retailers; because a consumerist approach to the news means giving the consumer what he wants, not what he needs.

And so it goes. While there is no shortage of experts (perhaps even a glut) to argue that marketplace individualiza-

While the
outlook is
not promising
for the
business of
journalism, it
may be
promising for
the craft
of journalism

jj

tion and specialization are here to stay, economists like Jay Forrester point out that rising advertising and marketing costs increasingly add to the cost of production. Relative to GNP, the United States spent three to four times as much on advertising in 1986 as France or West Germany. Retail space rose a startling 50 percent in the 1980s, far outstripping real economic growth (27 percent) or population (up 10.9 percent), leading one respected expert, Walter Loeb, to calculate that America is 47 percent "overstored." As in the 1920s, there has been an explosion of brand names. Between 1964 and 1980 the number of newly introduced products on the U.S. marketplace doubled; according to *Gorman's New Product News*, an industry newsletter. From 1980 to 1990, they nearly quintupled. During the same period newsprint sales increased in bulk by 22 percent, meaning that dailies got bigger and weeklies proliferated. Thanks to cable, the number of TV channels available to American households soared. In ad agencies these days the talk is of "clutter," of too many ads straining for attention, of too many goods jostling for shelf space, of too many consumers who are overwhelmed by the seemingly endless profusion of choices.

All of which seems clearly out of whack in an economy in which household indebtedness has risen to unsustainable levels, in which consumer spending has been slowing since 1987 and in outright retreat since mid-1990. With the start of the recession sometime last summer, indications are that the long-awaited shakeout is under way and that particularly in media, with the failure of dozens of magazine start-ups (*7 Days*, *Egg*, *Fame*, *Savvy*, *Wigwag*, etc.), along with falling newspaper ad revenues, the shedding of excess media capacity has begun.

How long it will continue is, of course, unknown. So is just what the shakeout will give rise to, since technology is continually revolutionizing economic institutions. America may continue on its current course, only faster; or it may take the entirely new tack that contrarians like Jay Forrester are predicting. Assuming the latter (and sooner or later some contrarians prove to be right), a few general principles would seem to be at work: as consumption weakens and

America begins to address its longstanding fiscal and financial problems — everything from consumer debt to shaky banks and real estate — the emphasis will shift from a spending mode to one of savings, investment, and productivity. Consumerism will recede, resulting in a smaller role for advertising and marketing. This means fewer media, certainly, but also different media — publications that are slimmer, more efficient in reaching broader audiences, and, because of declining ad revenue, forced to serve readers rather than advertisers.

The process has a political component. A renewed emphasis on production means more thought about how to fix whatever it is in America that has impeded meaningful economic development — the familiar litany of a floundering educational system, declining industry, economic polarization, and so forth. This, in turn, means journalism that is vital to all of society, news that's less a source of entertainment than of ideas and debate. As the always-contrary Edmund Wilson observed about New York during the grim year 1932, "Life and people here seem to me to have gotten much more interesting since the Depression. They grow more amiable and have more ideas in proportion as they have less money or less hope of making it in large quantities." Nothing concentrates the mind, in other words, more than a serious economic downturn.

The process has hardly begun, but we may already be seeing harbingers of change in the world of publishing — the surprising recent gains in readership and advertising shown by "thought leaders" such as *The Atlantic*, *Foreign Affairs*, *Technology Review*, and the North American edition of the London-based *Economist*, for example, and a mild tilt toward seriousness at such mainstream publications as *Esquire*, *Family Circle*, and even *Vanity Fair*. This is not to say that fluff will vanish, but it may indicate that more balanced fare will return to the table.

The bottom line (to use an '80s phrase): fewer ads, and a smaller press but also a better press and a new seriousness. The process may be painful, involving layoffs and liquidations. Yet, while the outlook is not promising for the business of journalism, it may be promising for the craft of journalism. ♦

Press Gallery

Congress and the
Washington Correspondents
Donald A. Ritchie



Press Gallery examines the lives of early, self-styled congressional journalists such as Horace Greeley, Emily Briggs, Jane Grey Swisshelm, Horace White, James G. Blaine, and others who were positioned in the hub of government when the Civil War, the purchase of Alaska, the Credit Mobilier scandal, and the Johnson impeachment hearings were making front-page news. Rich in anecdote, this lively book illuminates an important era of journalism and American history.

\$29.95 cloth/18 halftones

Harvard University Press
79 Garden St., Cambridge, MA 02138
(617) 495-2480

CJR INTERNSHIPS

Applications are now being accepted for the summer and fall programs. Interns will work closely with editors on a wide range of research, writing, and production projects.

These positions are unsalaried, but interns will be paid at customary rates for any of their writing published in CJR during their tenure. Interns may be enrolled concurrently in a college or university; they may also be unaffiliated. Positions are both part- and full-time.

Applicants should send a résumé, writing sample, two references, and a letter explaining their interest to:

Gloria Cooper, Managing Editor
Columbia Journalism Review
700 Journalism Building
Columbia University
New York, NY 10027

BOOKS

BATTLE LINES

BY JON KATZ

Liz Trotta is an orphaned child of broadcast journalism — accomplished, abused, betrayed, and finally abandoned. In her autobiography she bears powerful and eloquent witness to the tortured state of modern-day TV news, with a voice nobody in television really wants to listen to but everyone should hear. Viewers, network executives, reporters, producers, and aspiring journalists alike should be dragged kicking and screaming to *Fighting For Air* and forced to

Jon Katz is a contributing editor of CJR. His first novel, Sign Off, was published in February (see Short Takes, page 62).

read its every angry and riveting page.

The first female to cover a war for television, Trotta has had enough important journalistic currents flowing through her reportorial life to keep one of those public television media panels going for months. It was her good fortune to be assigned to some of the biggest stories of recent years — the Kennedy assassination, Vietnam, the Yom Kippur War, Chappaquiddick, the McGovern campaign, the hostage crisis in Iran, the von Bülow trial, the invasion of Grenada. Her misfortune was to almost always be the wrong person in the wrong place at the wrong time.

She was a woman in a male-dominated business who refused to market herself as a glamourpuss; a conservative among predominantly liberal colleagues; a print-trained reporter floundering amidst the sometimes dubious values of local television. She was an old-style field reporter in a business increasingly corrupted by glitz and flash. She was an independent-minded television reporter in an era of increasingly powerful producers, and a blunt, hot-tempered pain in the ass in a medium that requires political and diplomatic skills. (At CBS News, where Trotta sometimes worked on the

CBS Morning News, of which I was then the executive producer, she was perceived as a tough, reliable, and ferociously aggressive reporter and as a combative and abrasive colleague vocally contemptuous of executives.)

In another age, Trotta's journalistic credentials would have long ago earned her a respected niche. But she never had that kind of luck. Trotta is out of broad-

FIGHTING FOR AIR: IN THE TRENCHES WITH TELEVISION NEWS

BY LIZ TROTTE

SIMON & SCHUSTER. 288 PP. \$22.95

casting now, a victim of the mindless bloodletting that has decimated the three network news divisions since their takeover by hotel and real-estate conglomerates, light-bulb and weapons manufacturers, and slick local television entrepreneurs.

When she returned from a trip back to Vietnam on the tenth anniversary of the end of the war, a CBS News vice-president took her to lunch to echo a columnist's praise of her reporting. "He's right. You were the only reporter there who told the truth," he told her.

"I was elated," Trotta writes of the lunch. "The weeks of summer melted away before I saw him again. And when I did, he fired me."

In many ways, Trotta is the foremother of her still-conflicted successors, many of them still struggling to reconcile professional images and personal lives with television's brutal and still male ethos — Diane Sawyer, who vamps in *Vanity Fair* while still seeking journalistic credibility; Connie Chung, whose fertility problems are marketed by her employers to put her on magazine covers; Deborah Norville, unfairly cast as the wicked home-wrecker busting up the happy *Today Show* family; and, most recently, Meredith Vieira, forced to choose between a threatened fetus and one of the most glamorous jobs in TV news. Anyone left wondering how women are faring in broadcasting has only to ask this: Are there any well-known men in TV journalism in these kinds of pickles?

Trotta went first, paid dearly, and is still paying. The challenges, indignities, and humiliations she suffered as a woman, in the newsroom and in the field, are too numerous to list. Typical

"I DON'T DO WEDDINGS": Liz Trotta in Vietnam, 1968



FIND OUT WHY

"There's no denying that this book is fun."

James C. Clark, *Newspaper Research Journal*

"Crisp fascinating essays...**MediaGuide** is the stuff of a hundred dinner conversations for news junkies."

David Brooks, *The Wall Street Journal*

"MediaGuide has established itself as the indispensable Who's Who to U.S. print journalism...Political and press junkies will find this book fascinating reading, an irresistible blend of fact and opinion. It does for the press what the *Almanac of American Politics* does for the political scene."

G.R. Graf, *Choice*

"Briskly self-confident but not supercilious...provocative and often penetrating comments about many of the nation's top journalists, papers and magazines."

James D. Atwater, *The New York Times Book Review*

"A fascinating look at the media."

Malcolm S. Forbes, Jr., *Forbes*

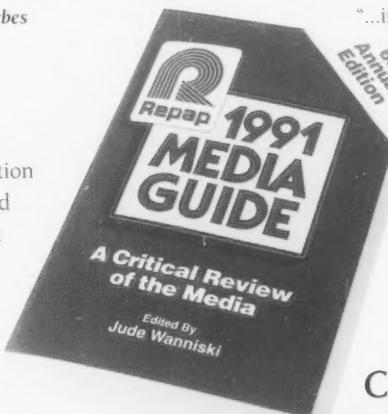
"...I loved it."

Virginia Postrel, *Reason*

"Here is the best combination of satire, information, and downright entertainment anywhere....Highly recommended when it first came out...and equally hailed now."

Bill Katz,
Library Journal

This sixth annual edition of the *MediaGuide* rates and evaluates the broadcast media and the best 800 reporters and columnists in the national press corps. Includes every national newspaper and over 50 periodicals. Examines coverage of every major story.



"...indispensable and addictive."

Brad Miner, *National Review*

"I give it ★★★★."

Dan Barnett, *Off the Record*

"Anyone even remotely interested in the state of the nation's Fourth Estate will find this fat book marvelous."

Herb Schmertz,
The Sacramento Union

Call 1-800 MEDIA-88
ask for EXT. 201

40%
Discount

INTRODUCTORY OFFER

Order the **1991 MediaGuide** for \$32.95 (\$29.95 + \$3 shipping) and we'll send you the **1990 MediaGuide** absolutely **FREE**

Name _____

Address _____

Charge Visa Master Card Card number _____

Check Signature _____ Exp. Date _____
(Payable to Polyconomics)

MAIL TO: Polyconomics, 86 Maple Ave., Morristown, N.J. 07960

201

CLASSIFIED

BOOKS/PUBLICATIONS/VIDEOS

ANNUAL YEARBOOK OF EXPERTS, AUTHORITIES & SPOKESPERSONS - 12,000 topics indexed to 1,400 sources. \$37.25 postpaid, free brochure. Write: 2233 Wisconsin Ave., N.W. #540, Washington, D.C. 20007 or call (202) 333-4904.

BEST CENSORED BOOK! Send \$10. Project Censored #18, Sonoma State University, Rohnert Park, CA, 94928; "Top 25 Censored Stories of 1990."

THE SELLING OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION: A History of News Coverage — revealing exposé of 18th century media management by John Alexander. Cloth, \$29.95 postpaid. Madison House, PO Box 3100-1, Madison, WI 53704.

MORE DOGS BRING COMPLAINTS — Crowds Rushing To See Pope Trample 6 To Death — Eye drops off shelves. CJR offers a collection of hilarious flubs from the nation's press culled from CJR's "The Lower Case": *Red Tape Holds Up New Bridge*. \$7.50 each includes postage and handling. Send order with payment to: Columbia Journalism Review, Attn: Books, 700A Journalism Building, Columbia University, New York, NY 10027.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

NEWS PRODUCER/WRITER with 5 years experience in consumer journalism or related fields to produce syndicated newscast for television stations. Strong script writing and factual reporting are essential. Start May, 1991. Southern Westchester (30 minute NYC commute). Send letter, résumé, writing samples and/or tape to: Jennifer Levine, TV Dept., Consumers Union, 101 Truman Avenue, Yonkers, New York 10703-1057.

MISCELLANEOUS

AERIAL/GROUND TOURS OF NATIONAL FORESTS in Pacific Northwest, June-September, for journalists covering forest issues. Call Lighthawk (505) 982-9656.

INVESTOR SEEKS PARTNERSHIP IN MID-WEST NEWS PUBLICATION, Box 2101, Northbrook, IL 60062.

THE PAPER PC by Robert S. Anthony. New personal computing column delivers news and advice in plain English. Readers can send in questions via electronic mail and read the responses in your newspaper. Attract new readers and computer advertising! Stadium Circle Features, Department C, 370 Court Street, Suite 85, Brooklyn, NY 11231. Phone: (718) 797-0210. MCI Mail: 373-1994.

To be in our July/August 1991 issue — for only \$1.75 per word — just send your typed copy with check by May 30, 1991.

NOTE: 10 word minimum. Zip codes count as one word; PO boxes and telephone numbers, each two words.

ALL ADS MUST BE PREPAID.

CJR Classified
700A Journalism Building
Columbia University
New York, NY 10027

was Trotta's opportunity in 1967 to do a piece for the NBC network — no small matter to an ambitious reporter working for the local New York affiliate — on the dress to be worn by Lynda Bird Johnson at her wedding.

When a network producer asked her to do the story, Trotta writes, she remembers blinking. "Then, recklessly, I blurted out, 'But I don't do weddings.'

"His eyes narrowed. 'I'm talking about a network special,' he replied, leaning on the word *network*.

"Oh, I don't mean to be rude," I sailed on blithely, "but I don't work on women's stories."

When her displeased and incredulous boss asked her about her response the next morning, she pleaded: "Don, don't you understand? I want to cover a war — not a wedding."

Eventually, she did.

She began as a newspaper reporter in the early 1960s, working for the *Chicago Tribune* and *Newsday*. WNBC in New York hired her in 1965 after the station's news director received a directive from an NBC executive to "find me a girl reporter." She went to Vietnam in 1968, worked for NBC News for thirteen years, then for CBS News until she was fired in one of the news division's ongoing rounds of budget cuts in 1985. She was shot at in Vietnam and pursued by mobs in Teheran; she faced danger innumerable other times so that one employer after another could air good pictures of big stories. She won three Emmys and two Overseas Press Club awards.

Her immigrant father, Trotta tells us, had urged her to be a lawyer or doctor, warning her against journalism, "because it will break your heart." Early in the book, Trotta quotes her mentor and friend, former *New York Times* reporter George Barrett: "Being a reporter means leaving airports with no one to say 'Good-bye,' and arriving at airports with no one to say 'Hello.'"

In Trotta's work, she encountered the additional isolation of often being the only woman around, mistrusted and resented by many of her bosses, patronized by politicians, soldiers, and camera crews, under continuous pressure to compete with women willing and eager to be valued for their looks. When it got lonely, Trotta says, she would recall Barrett's words "as a bargain struck," a bar-

gain she says she's never regretted.

Readers will have to decide for themselves whether that bargain was a good one. *Fighting For Air* is, in many respects, a bleak book, filled with disappointment, struggle, and betrayal. Too many of Trotta's friends and colleagues wind up dead — at least three are suicides — defeated, disappointed, or unemployed. Trotta started fighting when she landed her first television job and has yet to stop.

Trotta acknowledges that she clashed frequently with producers and that executives often had to intervene. But temperamental behavior wasn't fatal to everyone, she points out, citing the day

◆
**Trotta bears
powerful and
eloquent witness
to the tortured state
of modern-day
TV news**
◆

Dan Rather "stormed off the set when a tennis match cut into his broadcast, leaving the network black for six minutes. Tantrum for tantrum, I couldn't match that."

Still, Trotta's anger sometimes gives the book a vengeful, even vicious edge. She ridicules her tormentors' looks, wardrobes, and characters, calling one executive she disliked "ferretlike." In her view, few of those who disagree with her do so for any but the crassest and most venal of reasons. Self-criticism is grudging, self-awareness occasional.

Furious at the new generation of managers responsible for ousting her and hundreds of others from CBS and the other networks' news divisions, she skims over the forces that brought them to power and unraveled the proud traditions of network news.

The waste that often made network news inefficient, the arrogance that sometimes made it blind, get scant attention. Instead, Trotta offers portraits of one duplicitous, craven, ovine executive after another. Journalistic bitching about bosses is a cherished news tradition, but

after decades of rage she has lost some of her professional distance.

The soul of Trotta's journalistic life, however, and the heart of *Fighting For Air*, isn't her struggle to get even. It is her haunting sojourn in Vietnam. Just when Trotta's anger and score-settling begin to grow wearisome, her journey into that heart of darkness revives and enriches her book and makes much of her fury comprehensible, even appropriate. It is here that Trotta's journalistic self most vividly emerges, that her writing grows powerful, her story most wrenching.

Her description of landing under fire in the midst of a battle she had rushed to join: "Into the grass, ducking the rotors, running at a crouch, making for the tree line. Head down, waiting for the liftoff and dreading the silence to follow. No more umbilical cord. Soldiers and newsmen, alone on the ground left to the noiseless forces of the jungle. Would we get out that night? In a few days? At all? And what was I supposed to look for? Oh yes, the tripwires connected to the booby traps that rip your legs off. But where were they?... Walk through the muck of the rice paddy, not on the bordering dikes, or one of Charlie's punji stakes will rip a hole through your sole. Did I take a malaria pill?"

She dealt as well with sniper and mortar fire, leeches, giant mosquitoes, suffocating heat, hostile army public affairs officers, the dread of being captured, and daunting obstacles that made getting her tape back to New York an arduous, two-to-three-day process.

As a female broadcast war correspondent, Trotta was in uncharted territory. "By instinct and then by hard-learned habit, I worked out how to minimize the sex issue. It was crucial to know when to become invisible, as on that day at a base camp up north when a marine general and I unexpectedly ran smack into 300 of his men — out in the open taking showers. I pretended not to notice; it would only have made it an episode." As to her toilete — not a word Trotta would ever use — "I developed the refined technique of 'thinking dry,' keeping toilet trips into the bush at a minimum, even though the guys who stood guard — to make sure Charlie wasn't around — usually didn't mind."

As a conservative, Trotta was espe-

cially adrift, uncomfortable with what she perceived as the growing liberal bias of her colleagues against the war. She is disdainful of journalistic and civilian opponents of the Vietnam War, dismissing them as woolly-headed poseurs, suggesting that the military — many of whom she befriended and admired — could have won the war if not for interfering politicians, liberal journalists, and raunchy hippies.

Ten years and countless stories and ominous career signals later, she returned to cover the ghostly anniversary of America's defeat. "I always knew I would go back to Vietnam," writes Trotta at the opening of the book. "It was a compulsion, a resolve to return to the place where I had endured the worst — and some of the best — moments of my life."

But Trotta candidly acknowledges another reason for going back: she knew the wolves were circling at CBS News. On her return, she entered into the familiar network news ritual — checking in with the anchorman, in this case Rather, to see where things stood.

"You know, I realize we live in times when a young pretty face counts for a lot," she quotes an enigmatic Rather as saying. "But Dan Rather is only interested in first-rate news coverage." According to Trotta, Rather then warned her that she had "a problem" with at least one member of the new regime coming in to help the then-struggling *CBS Evening News*. Another vice-president seconded the warning, urging her to find a safe haven before the new management discovered she was past forty.

Once more, Trotta's reportorial instincts turned out to be sound. Shortly after her return to Vietnam, she was out of CBS, out of network news, and out of work. She had one day to clean out her office.

Throughout *Fighting For Air*, Trotta's voice is her own: the timeless, wise-cracking voice of the hard-bitten reporter. She is rarely overtly emotional about herself. Yet the book brings the reader close to tears more than once — for Trotta, whose father was right after all, for the long line of lonely, defeated journalists whose memories she invokes, and for television news, which has descended into a dark age of shallow, wasteful cruelty. ♦

**"Freedom is
as little lost
in a day as
won in a day."**

—Edmund Burke

The Fourth Estate and the Constitution

Freedom of the Press in America

LUCAS A. POWE, JR.

Powe goes back to the framing of the First Amendment, chronicling the two main traditions interpreting freedom of the press to illuminate the issues that ignite today's controversies. \$29.95 cloth, 376 pages

Transforming Free Speech

The Ambiguous Legacy of Civil Libertarianism

MARK A. GRABER

In what sense are free-speech rights traditional? Graber chronicles the "invention" of a tradition of free speech that ignored how social inequalities affect the exercise of free expression — dating to the political-legal machinations of the Progressive Era.

\$39.95 cloth, 347 pages

Prime-Time Families

Television Culture in Post-War America

ELLA TAYLOR

New in paper — "A study of the developments and permutations of this form over the last 40 years, when the world has turned a whole lot more than Ward and June could ever have dreamed."

—Voice Literary Supplement
\$11.95 paper, 208 pages

At bookstores or order toll-free
1-800-822-6657. Visa & MasterCard.

University of California Press
Berkeley Los Angeles
New York Oxford

SHORT TAKES

A STAR IS BORN

Linda Burns had been up half the night, stewing over the profile of her in *Television* magazine, the industry bible, about to go on sale that morning at the newsstand downstairs.... This was the day Linda Burns, queen of the Raleigh cable shopping channel, would be officially left behind, and Linda Burns, serious television journalist and potential superstar, would be born....

She had been superb during the interviews with Kristed, she constantly reminded herself. She had quoted from *Foreign Affairs Quarterly* at least twice, from Henry James and *The Washington Monthly*. She worried that she had overdone it, but [her agent Marty] Hoffman, who had been stroking reporters for thirty years, said you couldn't overdo it.

She was proudest of the point — just after the veal piccata and before the sorbet — when she had leaned back, eyed Kristed coolly, and astonished him by

saying, "Dammit, Kristed, if we're going to be friends — and I feel in some ways closer to you than anybody I've met since college, no matter what you write about me, and I mean that — I want to ask you a question. And if I don't get an honest answer, I'm going to get up and walk out of this restaurant."

Kristed had been taking in the stares of the tourists and hotshots at the other tables, fantasizing for a moment or two that people thought he and Burns were a couple. Despite his having seen forty a few years ago, and despite his fleeing hairline and swelling belly, he had cultivated an intellectual sort of look that he thought worked well here at the *Café des Artistes*. True, in one hour he had to be at Grand Central to catch his train to Yonkers, which was certainly not where Burns or most of these other people would be heading. But the people watching didn't know that, did they?

Now, puzzled, Kristed put down his spoon.

"What is it you want to ask?" he said, pushing his notebook aside as if to signal that she had his full attention.

She bit her lower lip, seeming to agonize about whether or not to ask, and then she shook off the indecision. "Have

you ever thought about doing television? There, I've asked it. I've asked it straight out." She leaned back and crossed her arms.

Kristed's eyes widened and his face reddened. "You mean — What do you mean? My working in television?"

Burns leaned forward, concerned. "I didn't mean to make you uncomfortable or put you in an awkward position. Forget it. It was a thoughtless thing to do. I'm sorry I raised it."

Kristed, fiddling with his napkin, demurred. "No, Linda. No, hell, I'm asking you enough questions — you have the right to ask me some. It's just that I'm surprised. No one has ever asked me that before, at least not that directly. You're probably joking, aren't you?"

Burns looked uncomfortable. "I'm so sorry. Marty will kill me for this, for risking tickling you off like this when we were in the middle of an interview. It's typical that I feel I have to ask the tough question, no matter what; it's become second nature to me, even when it isn't politic —"

Kristed shook his hand, looking slightly anguished. "Look, Linda, no, it isn't an insulting question. Hell, I'm flattered. I take it as a compliment. Why

LINCOLN'S UNSHINING HOUR

After Albert D. Boileau took over the Philadelphia *Evening Journal*, the paper began criticizing the Lincoln administration sharply. One editorial early in 1863

described the war as having entered a phase with "no other purpose than revenge, and thirst for blood and plunder of private property" and declared the Lincoln administration "incapable of ... winning victory in the field." The order for Boileau's arrest, issued by General Robert Schenck, commander of the Middle Department (which included Philadelphia), specifically mentioned an editorial that praised Jefferson Davis's annual message at the expense of Lincoln's annual message. Late at night on January 27, Boileau was arrested and taken to Fort McHenry. Democrats protested vigorously, though the reaction fell short of anything legally or physically troublesome to the Lincoln administration. Boileau recanted, disclaiming responsibility for inspiring the articles in question and promising not to permit others like them. He was then released, and his newspaper, temporarily suppressed after having criticized the government for arresting its proprietor, began publishing again.

FROM THE FATE OF LIBERTY: ABRAHAM LINCOLN AND CIVIL LIBERTIES
BY MARK E. NEELY, JR. OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS. 278 PP. \$24.95

The Bettmann Archive



Czeslaw Czapinski



would I be offended?"

Burns signaled the waiter for more wine. She was a twice-a-week regular; he knew her hand signals. The staff at restaurants like this one had sound instincts about who was going to be a superstar and who wasn't, and they were going with her.

"Because I know newspaper people find television offensive at times, find its values disturbing, as do many of us who work there," she said haltingly. "I envy so much your freedom, your use of language, the fact that your looks don't matter—"

She threw both her hands up over her face. "I'm sorry, Don. That wasn't what I meant to say. Here I go again. I don't think I'll ever be able to be as glib as you need to be to make it in television. Of course, I didn't mean to say you weren't good-looking enough to make it on television, although you'd better stop that hairline."

They were both laughing now, warmed by candor and, well, intimacy would not be too strong a word, he thought, although he had been around stars long enough not to have his head turned. But Kristed did not want to lose the intriguing thread of the conversation.

"Linda, you are frank, but that's a refreshing quality in your business. You wouldn't believe how many people try to outsmart me—"

"I would believe it, Don. I work with those people!"

"Of course you do. Look, I know I'm not pretty. The question about television is intriguing, though. Others have hinted at it . . ."

"Can I be honest with you, Don?"

"Why not, Linda? Why break a tradition?"

"Don't do it."

"No?"

"No, don't do it. It would be a big mistake. You don't have the delivery for television. You're a word person, somebody who uses the language. Television would destroy that. Phil's my boss — so is Julian — and Marty is practically my father, but they're trying to kiss your ass and you know it. Even though I'm not yet thirty-five, I've seen that scam often enough to know somebody like you can't be bought that way. What was it Keats wrote in one of his poems? 'You know my face, you know my heart, you know the winds that take the soul and turn it to a barren space.' I think that was Keats."

Kristed nodded. He was not into poetry, and Linda could be intimidating, the way she always seemed to have some gem at the tip of her tongue. He would have to remember the Keats reference for the story. Also the anecdote her producer had whispered — swearing him to secrecy about the source — about her singing arias from obscure French operas in editing rooms late at night....

Burns smiled. There would be no fussing over the check. The dinner would simply go on USB's bill, unless Kristed made a stink about it, like those tiresome reporters from the *Times* and *The Washington Post*.

She had enjoyed the dinner. She even liked Kristed. He was going to be a historic influence in her life — the person who buried the Home Shopping Queen for good. She smiled at him and allowed herself a deep, sweet, long breath. It was harder than it looked; these guys were not dumb, despite the frequency with which they were hustled. One misstep could kill you, but she had not made a single one.

FROM **SIGN OFF**

A NOVEL BY JON KATZ
BANTAM BOOKS. 385 PP. \$18.95

THE HUNT FOR IMAGES OF WAR

People have been making war for thousands of years, but each time it is as if it is the first war ever waged, as if everyone has started from scratch.

A captain appeared and said he was the army press spokesman. He was asked to describe the situation and he stated that they were winning all along the front and that the enemy was suffering heavy casualties.

"OK," said the AP correspondent. "Let's see the front."

The Americans, the captain explained, were already there. They always go first because of their influence — and because they commanded obedience and could arrange all sorts of things. The captain said we could go the next day, and that everyone should bring two photographs.

We drove to a place where two artillery pieces stood under some trees. Cannons were firing and stacks of ordnance were lying around. Ahead of us we could see the road that led to El Salvador. Swamp stretched along both sides of the road, and dense green bush began past the belt of swamp.

The sweaty, unshaven major charged with holding the road said we could go no further. Beyond this point both armies were in action, and it was hard to tell who was who or what belonged to which side. The bush was too thick to see anything. Two opposing units often noticed each other only at the last moment,

when, wandering through the overgrowth, they met face to face. In addition, since both armies wore the same uniforms, carried the same equipment, and spoke the same language, it was difficult to distinguish friend from foe.

The major advised us to return to Tegucigalpa, because advancing might mean getting killed without even knowing who had done it. (As if that mattered, I thought.) But the television cameramen said they had to push forward, to the front line, to film soldiers in action, firing, dying. Gregor Straub of NBC said he had to have a close-up of a soldier's face dripping sweat. Rodolfo Carillo of CBS said he had to catch a despondent commander sitting under a bush and weeping because he had lost his whole unit. A French cameraman wanted a panorama shot with a Salvadoran unit charging a Honduran unit from one side, or vice versa. Somebody else wanted to capture the image of a soldier carrying his dead comrade. The radio reporters sided with the cameramen. One wanted to record the cries of a casualty summoning help, growing weaker and weaker, until he breathed his last breath. Charles Meadows of Radio Canada wanted the voice of a soldier cursing war amid a hellish racket of gunfire. Naotake Mochida of Radio Japan wanted the bark of an officer shouting to his commander over the roar of artillery — using a Japanese field telephone.

FROM **THE SOCCER WAR**

A MEMOIR BY RYSZARD KAPUSCINSKI
ALFRED A. KNOPF. 234 PP. \$21



Photo: Reuters/Bettmann

Nuclear-generated electricity saves more oil each day than we used to import from Iraq and Kuwait.

Generating electricity with nuclear energy instead of imported oil helps reduce America's dangerous dependence on unstable energy sources.

With 112 operating plants in this country, nuclear electricity already cuts U.S. oil imports by 740,000 barrels

every day. That's more than the oil we imported from Iraq and Kuwait before hostilities broke out last August.

But America still imports about half the oil it consumes—the equivalent of four huge supertankers of foreign oil every day.

We need more nuclear plants—to meet

America's growing electricity demand and to bolster our independence from dangerously unstable energy sources.

For more information and two free booklets, write to the U.S. Council for Energy Awareness, P.O. Box 66080, Dept. ST16, Washington, D.C. 20035.

Nuclear energy means more energy independence.

The Lower case

Promising theory on universe collapsing

The Arizona Republic 2/10/91

Son of Jimmy Hoffa plans to follow dad's footsteps

Marin Independent Journal
(San Rafael, Calif.) 2/21/91

Ancient rite gives Japan new emperor

The (Santa Fe) New Mexican
1/12/90



Overbrook kids enjoy 25 years of preschool

Clintonville-Beechwold This Week (Columbus, Ohio) 2/4/91

Doc Pomus, 65, Hits Composer

New York Newsday 3/15/91

Local couple tells of anxieties of base life

Bangor (Me.) Daily News 1/22/91

Filmmaker **Oliver Stone** heads for Texas in April to begin filming the drama *JFK*, featuring scenarios relating to his 1963 assassination of John Kennedy.

Rocky Mountain News (Denver, Colo.) 2/26/91

Muslims, Christians, Jews celebrate Easter differently

News-Tribune (Portales, N.M.) 3/15/91

CINCINNATI DRY CLEANER SENTENCED IN SUIT BROUGHT BY ATTORNEY GENERAL LEE FISHER

Press release from Office of Attorney General of Ohio 3/20/91

Seat open on Planning Commission

Dana Point (Calif.) News 3/7/91



"After finding no qualified candidates for the position of principal, the school department is extremely pleased to announce the appointment of David Steele to the post," said Philip Streifer, Superintendent of Schools. "David was the best choice."

Barrington (R.I.) Times 3/6/91

Bill died with quiet blessing

Calgary Herald (Alberta, Canada) 2/2/91

Researcher Robert Butler showed that when some elderly people remembered the past on a regular basis, they were less depressed than those who weren't.

Seattle Post-Intelligencer 1/26/91

Judge Says Gates Can Return to Job Life Expectancy Of Blacks Shortening

San Francisco Chronicle 4/9/91

CJR will pay \$25 for items published in The Lower case. Please send only original clippings suitable for reproduction, together with name and date of publication.



ABSOLUT SUBLIMINAL.

TO SEND A GIFT OF ABSOLUT® VODKA (EXCEPT WHERE PROHIBITED BY LAW) CALL 1-800-243-3787.
PRODUCT OF SWEDEN. 40 AND 50% ALC/VOL (80 AND 100 PROOF). 100% GRAIN NEUTRAL SPIRITS. ©1989 CARILLON IMPORTERS, LTD., TEANECK, NJ.

